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A BELMOND HOTEL

MALLORCA

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Golden hour on Sullivan's Island in Charleston

PHOTOGRAPH: SQUIRE FOX

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THE 2023 HOT LIST
Our 27th annual guide to the new and reimagined hotels that are pushing boundaries in design, service, and sustainability. Plus: Restaurants changing the way we eat; cool new ways to get where we're going; elegant, adventurous cruises; and more
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The bold, monochromatic lobby of Villa Palladio in Jaipur, India—a 2023 Hot List hotel

PHOTOGRAPH: ATUL PRATAP CHAUHAN

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editor's letter

It's 5:21 a.m., and I am in my hotel room in Arenal Volcano National Park in Costa Rica, listening to an absolute riot of birdsong, which was immediately preceded by a ferocious predawn downpour. The mosaic of sounds feels like the aural equivalent of the landscape of mountains and rain forest outside my room: It's dense with jewel-like tones, many soft and round, some strong and spiky. Somewhere above the tree canopy, the volcano lurks behind the mist. I've been here just 12 hours, and already I'm falling in love with my hotel.

This is Nayara Tented Camp, which appeared on *Condé Nast Traveler*'s Hot List three years ago. (It and its neighboring sister properties, Nayara Gardens and Nayara Springs, are also regulars on the Readers' Choice Awards.) The hotel's location gives it an incredible advantage, but also a lot to live up to. It does so with thoughtful landscape design that lets humans and sloths and howler monkeys comfortably share space, an approach to hiring and training that has allowed it to recruit more than 98 percent of its staff from the region, and a commitment to sustainability that has recently led it to achieve carbon-neutrality. All of this takes a tremendous amount of *work*—which is an essential part of what it means to be a Hot List hotel.

Work is what was required to give us the new classics on this year's list (page 17), including sanctuaries like Passalacqua, a showcase for Italian artisanal tradition on the banks of Lake Como; Caravan Agafay, a stylish, Berber-inspired retreat in the rocky desert outside Marrakech, from the community-minded brand Habitas; and Wildflower Farms, Auberge Resorts Collection's Catskills outpost steeped in the region's agricultural heritage. I know that the Hot List reflects a tendency on the part of magazines (and our culture) to obsess over the new and the now, but these are properties, like Nayara and all the honorees on our 26 previous lists, that will stand the test of time—because of the thought, care, and effort that went into making them. Whether now or in 30 years, these are the places you should try to visit in your lifetime.

JESSE ASHLOCK
DEPUTY GLOBAL EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
AND HEAD OF EDITORIAL CONTENT, U.S.

jesseashlock

on the cover

Cliff jumping at Cala Macarella Beach in Menorca, Spain.
Photographed by Andrew Urwin

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Endless summer vibes at Club Scannella, on the Italian island of Ischia.
Photographed by Taylor Simpson (@taylor.g.simpson)

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VOLUME 58, NO. 4, *CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER* (ISSN 0893-9683) is published 8 times per year by Condé Nast, which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers Inc. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: Condé Nast, One World Trade Center, New York, NY 10007. Roger Lynch, Chief Executive Officer; Pamela Drucker Mann, Global Chief Revenue Officer & President, U.S. Revenue. Periodicals postage paid at New York, New York, and at additional mailing offices. Canadian Goods and Services Tax Registration No. 123242885-RT0001.

POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS. (SEE DMM 507.1.5.2.); NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: SEND ADDRESS CORRECTIONS TO *CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER,* Box 37617, Boone, Iowa 37617-0617.

FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADDRESS CHANGES, ADJUSTMENTS, OR BACK ISSUE INQUIRIES: Please write to *CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER,* Box 37617, Boone, Iowa 37617-0617, call 800-777-0700, or email subscriptions@condenasttraveler.com. Amoco Torch Club members write to Amoco Torch Club, Box 9014, Des Moines, Iowa 50306. Please give both new and old address as printed on most recent label. Subscribers: If the Post Office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year. If, during your subscription term or up to one year after, the magazine becomes undeliverable, or you are ever dissatisfied with your subscription, let us know. You will receive a full refund on all unmailed issues. Address all editorial, business, and production correspondence to *CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER,* One World Trade Center, New York, NY 10007. For reprints, please email reprints@condenast.com or call Wright's Media 877-652-5295. For reuse permissions, please email contentlicensing@condenast.com or call 800-897-8666. Visit us online at cntraveler.com. To subscribe to other Condé Nast magazines on the World Wide Web, visit condenast.com. Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services which we believe would interest our readers. If you do not want to receive these offers and/or information, please advise us at Box 37617, Boone, Iowa 37617-0617, or call 800-777-0700.

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The team has also redesigned several restaurants, plus the Observation Lounge, where you can enjoy an elegant cocktail under an Art Nouveau-inspired chandelier. A cascading sculpture greets you at Compass Rose's entrance; inside, dine under a shimmering canopy of tree-like pillars.

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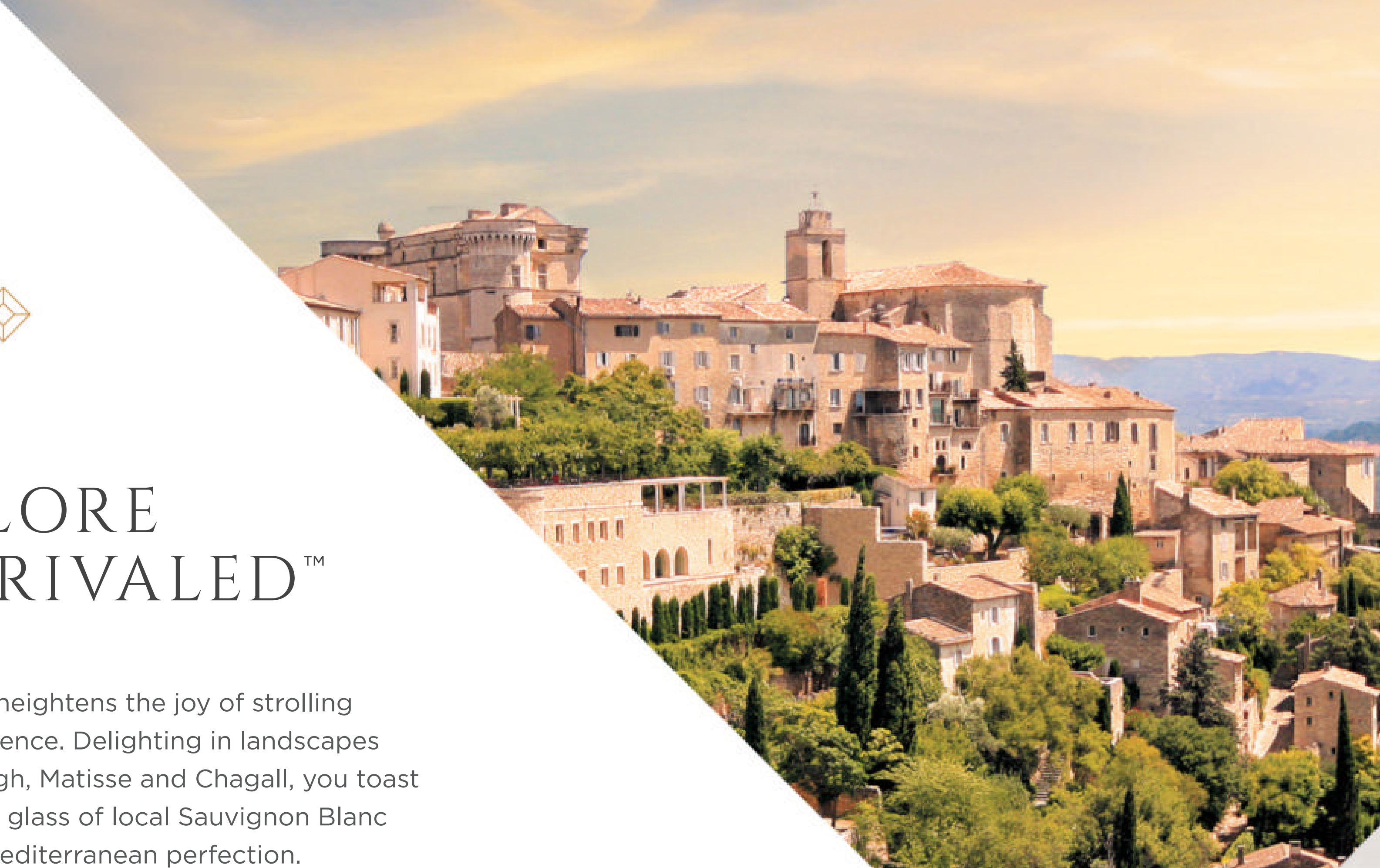

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Nothing makes us more excited to get up and go than putting together our annual Hot List, now in its 27th year. This curated collection of the world's best new hotels, cruises, restaurants, cultural destinations, and transportation projects is a labor of love for our global team, which spends the year researching, visiting, and vetting the entries to bring you a definitive directory of places whose style, ethos, and service set new standards for hospitality. Think a family-run hotel making Lake Como even more sophisticated; a cruise ship that ups passengers' access to places like Greenland; or a community-driven restaurant igniting Ecuador's Indigenous dining scene. All that's left is for you to decide where you're going first.

FOR THE COMPLETE 2023 HOT LIST, VISIT **CNTRAVELER.COM/HOT-LIST**

hot list

PHOTOGRAPH: ATLANTIS THE ROYAL

stay » DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Atlantis the Royal

Any retreat that bills itself as "the most ultra-luxury experiential resort in the world" is not going for subtlety, but here that's very much the point. Sitting alongside its famous sister, Atlantis the Palm, on Dubai's iconic Palm Jumeirah, Atlantis the Royal's eye-catching curves contain 795 rooms, suites, and penthouses, 17 restaurants and bars, a 1.2-mile beach, and more than 90 pools. Beyoncé performed at its opening celebration, and Tiësto wrote its theme song. (Yes, it has its own soundtrack.) Guests enter the lobby between walls of fire and water, conceived by Moshe Safdie, who created the Rain Vortex at Singapore's Jewel Changi Airport. The spaces are vast, with light bouncing off enormous swathes of marble and massive fish tanks; stately internal boulevards lined with luxury boutiques crisscross the property. Up in the rooms, the mood is calmer, with soothing palettes and surprisingly minimalist decor accentuating views, from the Palm-facing balconies especially. The suites and penthouses elevate the experience even further, with landscaped terraces and glass-walled pools. The daybeds at the sky-high infinity pool, Cloud 22, have already become legendary, as have the poolside recliners at Nobu by the Beach, where sunbathers can enjoy classic dishes like spicy tuna with crispy rice. The terrace of Estiatorio Milos is the spot for a front-row seat to the fountain show, accompanied by Greek meze and salt-baked fish. At Jaleo by José Andrés, the clanging of a cowbell indicates that a huge dish of paella is about to be cooked over a wood fire. Even in a city that does supersize better than anywhere else, this is an entirely new level. *From about $579; atlantis.com*

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hot list

eat » PARIS

Alluma

At first glance, Alluma may seem like an outlier on this stretch of the 11th arrondissement, known for its street-food joints. But this elegant neo-bistro from the Israeli chef Liran Tal and his wife, Noa, has found an audience with its vibrant ode to Levantine flavors. The couple brightened up an 860-square-foot former Moroccan restaurant with marble tabletops and green velvet banquettes. The most colorful elements come from Tal's seasonal six-course tasting menu, which might include sea bream crudo with figs and dukkah, dressed with buttermilk and fig leaf oil. Don't skip out on the wine pairing that showcases a mostly organic selection from France, Spain, Italy, and Armenia.

stay » CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

The Pinch

When the iconic Bob Ellis Shoes shuttered its doors after 66 years at the corner of King and George streets, Randall Cook took note. On multiple visits, the cofounder and CEO of the Philadelphia-based hospitality group Method Co. had fallen in love with the Holy City's rich history, culinary prowess, and creative industry. So Cook and his team purchased five adjoining lots and set about preserving, restoring, and transforming the enclave of buildings into a stylish, warmly contemporary boutique hotel, with active storefronts below and two floors above containing 25 chic rooms, suites, and residences, each with a designer kitchen. The transition has been so smooth, many locals didn't notice the change until realizing the upper windows were no longer boarded up, then spying the Pinch's understated marquee. Though the launch has been quiet, buzz has been growing about the hotel's ground-floor restaurant, The Quinte, a sexy, glowing, darkly paneled oyster bar fronting George Street. Heads will also turn when restaurant Lowland opens in an adjacent historic dwelling, with a tavern, a second-floor dining room with a hand-painted mural and wood-burning fireplace, and a much-anticipated private extended-stay residence on the top floor. *From $479; thepinch.com*

PHOTOGRAPHS: LE PHOTOGRAPHE DU DIMANCHE, SQUIRE FOX

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stay » HEALDSBURG, CALIFORNIA

The Madrona Hotel

Set on a vineyard-flanked hilltop one mile outside Healdsburg, this 19th-century gabled manse feels more like a cool country club than your typical wine-country hotel. You'll find the expected Napa and Sonoma luxury-resort amenities, like a restaurant with a famous chef, lovely gardens, and an expansive swimming pool. But with just 24 rooms and bungalows spread across six historic buildings on eight gorgeously landscaped acres, the experience is unexpectedly intimate and the vibe insidery. Sunday brunch on the breezy terrace attracts a local crowd with dishes like duck confit and poached eggs and an extra-large "table" waffle for sharing. Yes, you're in the heart of wine country, but go ahead and order the estate martini at the Madrona's downstairs bar. It's what all the area winemakers come for on Friday nights. The front parlor, with its original fireplace and animal-print velour couch, is so inviting that guests often kick off their shoes and put their feet up to read a book—exactly the make-yourself-at-home feeling San Francisco designer Jay Jeffers was hoping to achieve with his first hotel project. Inspired by the Aesthetic Movement—the 19th-century philosophy that prioritized the pursuit of art for art's sake, which was popular when the home was built—Jeffers mixed old-world and bold contemporary furnishings with more than 200 antiques (some from the home's original owners) and an art collection curated by San Francisco gallerist Lisa Dolby Chadwick. In anyone else's hands, the effect could feel precious. Instead, guests feel like they're being hosted by a friend with exceptionally good taste. *From $750; themadronahotel.com*

eat » BROOKLYN

Place des Fêtes

This note-perfect wine bar hits that rare atmospheric sweet spot of warm, intimate, and candlelit without feeling sleepy. Rather, it buzzes with a festive energy that's perfectly paired with chef Nico Russell's playful Spanish- and Portuguese-inspired small plates and a palate-expanding selection of cocktails and wines by the glass from beverage director Piper Kristensen. For date night, cozy up to the bar with views of the open kitchen, or fill up the large communal table in the back with a group and sample the entire 20-item menu. Either way, try not to miss the crispy maitake mushroom served with a decadent black-garlic truffle fudge.

PHOTOGRAPHS: MATTHEW MILLMAN, CHRIS COE

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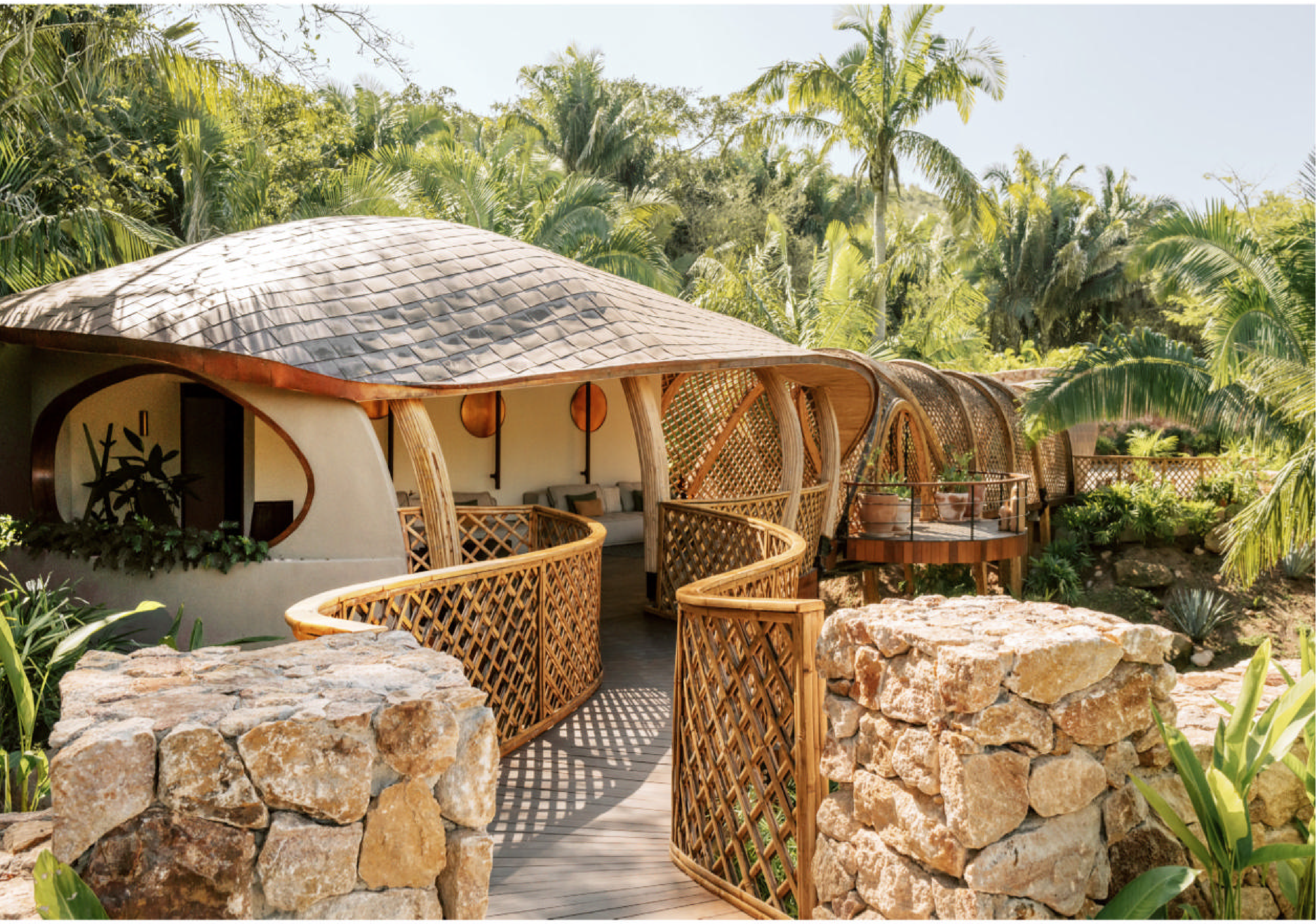

stay » PUNTA MITA, MEXICO

Naviva, a Four Seasons Resort

This is not your parents' Four Seasons. Formalities, like a front desk, have disappeared, and the traditional concierge has been replaced with guides who can help arrange everything from dinner reservations to surf lessons. The all-inclusive model means the entire stay is blissfully transaction-free, and the intimate scale—at just 30 guests, the size is also a shift for the brand—allows for unscripted experiences such as mezcal tastings with local distillers. And the tented suites are what it takes to persuade travelers to book a hotel in Punta Mita that isn't right on the beach. Terraced into 48 acres of forested Pacific-facing cliffs, this adults-only glamping resort was designed by sustainably minded safari-tent pioneers Luxury Frontiers. Each of its 15 spacious rooms has an indoor soaking tub, an outdoor shower, and a private plunge pool with sunset views. Taking in and getting out into nature is at the heart of Naviva, but a visit to the two spa pods is a must for treatments informed by Mesoamerican traditions, like the five-hour Refuge Retreat. It includes a copal cleansing and Mayan mud massage, plus post-pampering time to soak in the pod's oversized palm-shaded tub. Guests have access to the amenities at sister property Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita, just next door, but it's doubtful you'll want to leave this jungle oasis. *From $3,950; fourseasons.com*

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARIANNA JAMADI, GEORGE LOZADA, ASHLEIGH FRANS, DARREN COX

cruise » VIRGIN VOYAGES

Valiant Lady

During summer, the second ship in Sir Richard Branson's hip cruise line charts a route from Barcelona to Ibiza via lesser-known ports such as Carrara, Italy, where the marble shines as it did when Michelangelo sourced the slab that became David (in winter the ship hits the Caribbean). Virgin is all about disrupting the status quo, and the aim here is to attract the sort of passenger who wouldn't normally consider a cruise. Does it succeed? Yes. On the inaugural voyage, the passengers were as diverse as the crew, drawn by drag queen performances and all-inclusive menus from restaurants that include a mezcal bar, a test kitchen, and a Korean barbecue joint. Peer beyond the on-brand red to encounter moments of genuinely outstanding design, such as the Roman and Williams–designed Wake Restaurant. This is a real showstopper. *Seven-day sailings from $900 per person; virginvoyages.com*

eat » CAPE TOWN

Emazulwini

Chef Mmabatho Molefe brings contemporary Zulu and Ngoni cuisine to luxury dining with this swank but down-to-earth spot at the V&A Waterfront. With views overlooking the working harbor, the immaculate interior is flecked with white, red, and blue, spotlighting pieces from designers like Thabisa Mjo and Ashanti Design. Diners can expect elevated riffs on homey meals like vetkoek (fried dough) with chicken polony, as well as amasi (fermented milk) ice cream with whey jellies and caramel. The plating is all fine dining, but the vibrant flavors and friendly staff make this place anything but pretentious.

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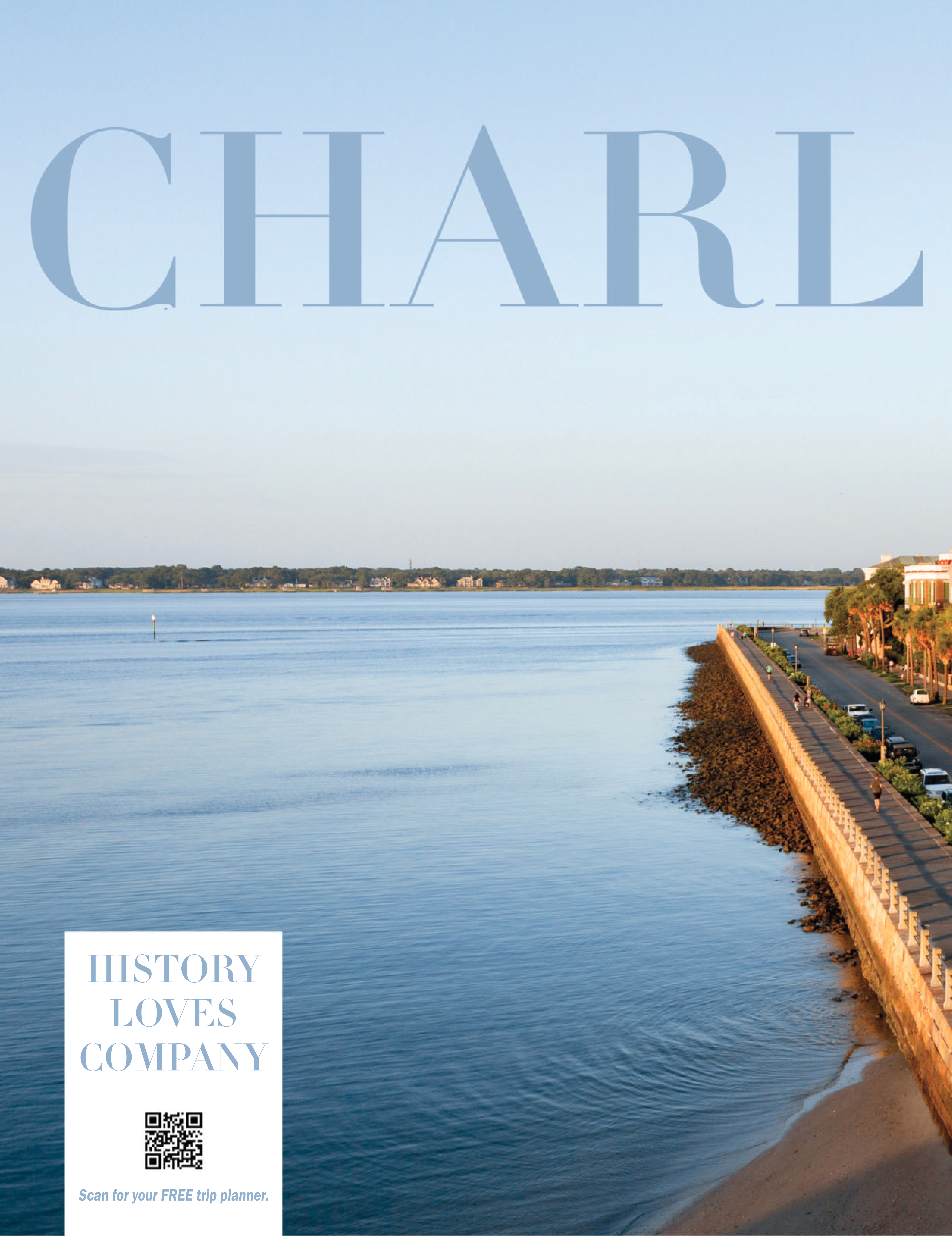
visit » NEW YORK

MUSEUM OF BROADWAY

In this museum just off Times Square, there are original costumes from *The Lion King* and more, though the real attraction is the backstage experience. It allows you to wander from the stage door (a call sheet from the 2018 revival of *My Fair Lady* is the first thing you see), past props and sandbags, until you land at center stage.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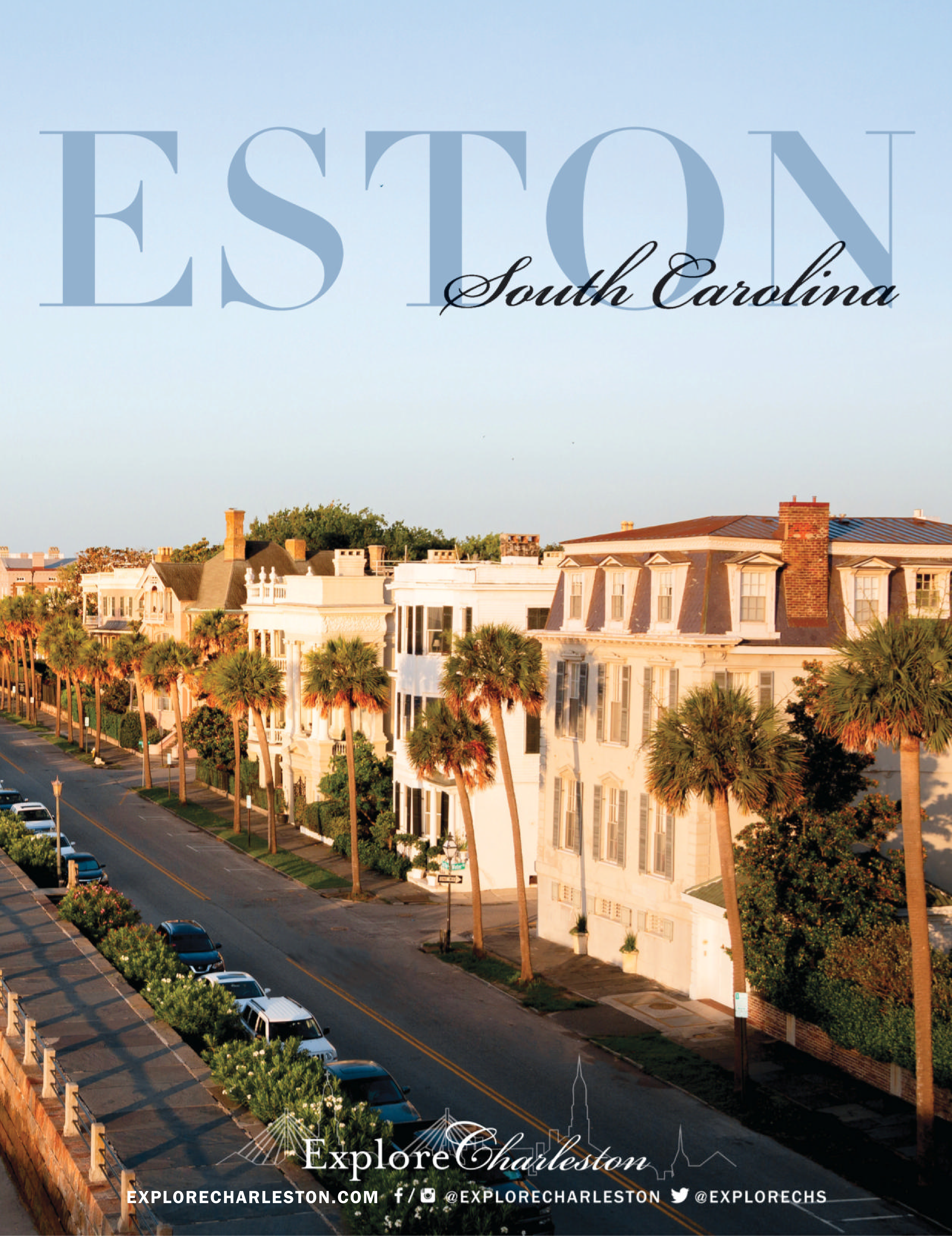
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Second Acts

Sometimes the best openings are reborn hotels that mix just the right amount of newness with legacy selling points you'd never want to lose

Mayfair House Hotel and Garden
A Miami icon for nearly 40 years, it's fresh off a $50 million facelift, which turned the dimly lit suites into spacious homestyle escapes with velvet couches. But the addition of Sipsip, a chic rum bar by the rooftop pool, may be what pulls the party away from South Beach and into Coconut Grove.

Cambridge Beaches
To celebrate the centennial of this Bermuda grande dame, new owners Dovetail + Co splurged on a total revamp. The 86 cottages now have a tropical-inspired coral-and-sea-foam palette and boldly patterned textiles. A highlight is the Sunken Harbor Club, an outpost of the beloved Brooklyn bar, which is decorated with shipwreck treasures rescued by the late Bermudan diving legend Teddy Tucker.

← Hotel Chelsea
If the walls of this Manhattan institution could talk, they'd regale us with tales of rock-and-roll royalty who played and partied here. Reborn after an 11-year closure, the 155 rooms, which share the building with apartments from longtime residents, have riots of wallpaper alongside original fireplaces. But the new bar, with its banquettes and solid cocktail menu, is sure to be where most of today's mischief will happen.

Rancho Pescadero
Although Lisa Harper and Bill Moore have expanded their chic Todos Santos retreat from 12 guest rooms to 103, its 30 botanical acres remain a tranquil, spacious escape for everything from whale watching to gathering flowers for a spa treatment later that day.

PHOTOGRAPH: JOE THOMAS

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A Music Lover's Magical Mystery Tour of Alabama

The state is as famed for its Southern hospitality as it is for its inspired soundtrack.

Alabama's storied music scene has helped set the tone for some of America's most important music. From soul and jazz to rock 'n' roll and country, the region's musical roots run deep—giving rise to greatness like Hank Williams and W.C. Handy and playing host to bands like The Rolling Stones, who laid down some classics in the area's recording studios. Beyond its harmonious heritage, the heartbeat of this Southern hotspot is its live music—in roadside dives, music festivals, and arenas alike. Discover why this state is a must-stop for aficionados.

MELODIC ORIGINS

To follow Alabama's historic beat, visit the **Alabama Music Hall of Fame** in Tuscumbia, which houses memorabilia honoring the achievements of the state's greats like Lionel Richie, Emmylou Harris, Nat King Cole, W.C. Handy, and Hank Williams in its 12,500-square-foot exhibit hall. For a stroll down music's memory lane, hit the **Hank Williams Museum** in Montgomery, where country music's first superstar's legacy is preserved, along with his baby blue Cadillac.

RECORDING HISTORY

The legacy of the state's signature sound was immortalized at **Fame Studio** where, beginning in the 1960s, some of music's most groundbreaking artists flocked to record with the studio's in-house band, the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, a.k.a., "The Swampers." Later members of the band formed a second location down the road: **Muscle Shoals Sound Studio**. Tour both studios to see where legends like Aretha Franklin, The Rolling Stones, Otis Redding, and Lynyrd Skynyrd, laid their most influential tracks.

LIVE MUSIC

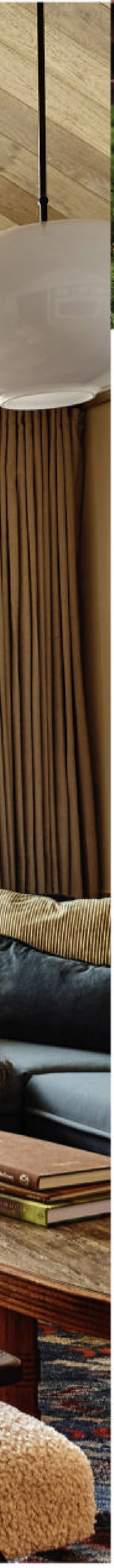
There's no better way to take in Alabama's sound and glory than by experiencing its live music. From top-name touring acts to annual music festivals, there's something to strike a chord from one end of the state to the other. Check out a roadside dive like **Flora-Bama** in Orange Beach if your jam is local bands.

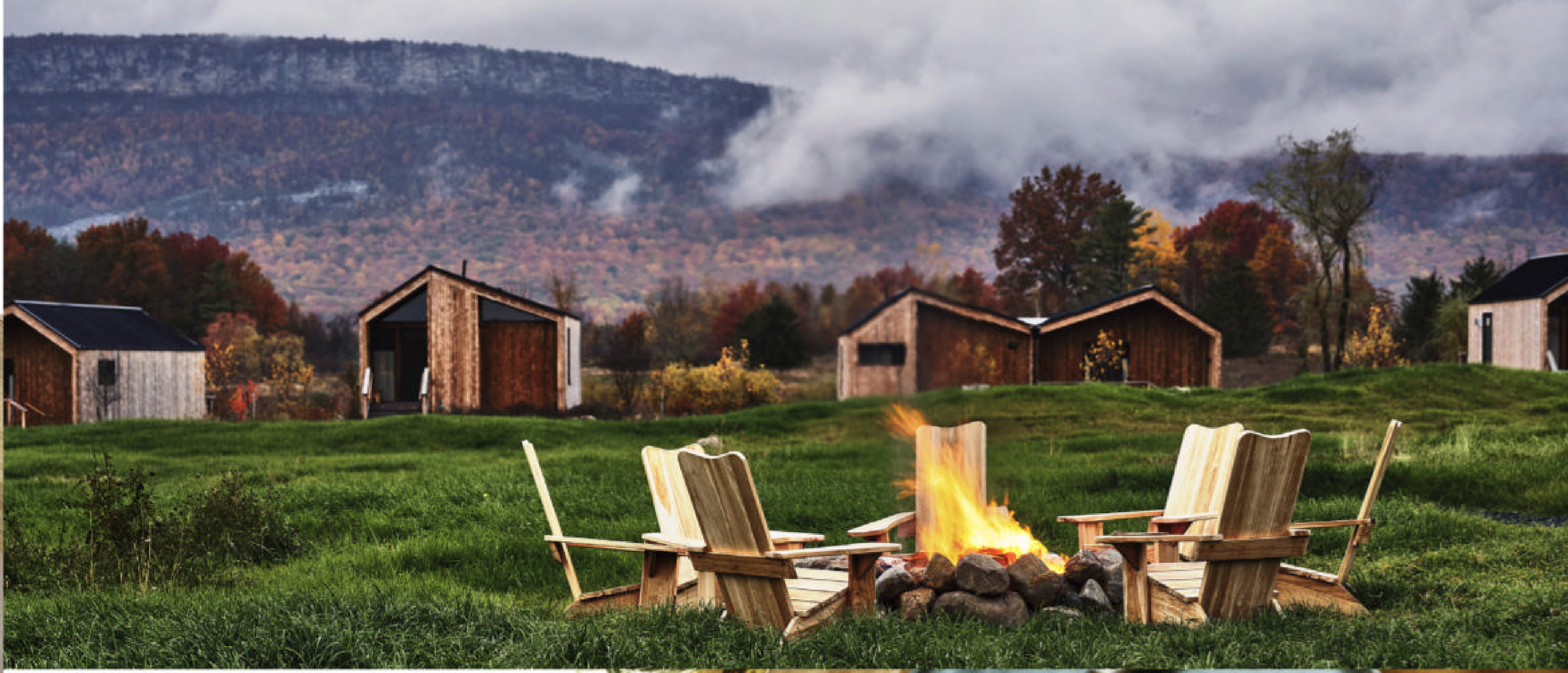
To catch a hot-ticket act, look over the lineup at **The Orion Amphitheater** in Huntsville. Or get on the festival circuit, with epic shows like the **Sloss Furnace Fest** in Birmingham for your fill of punk, or the **W.C. Handy Festival** in the Shoals region, if the blues is more your beat.

Visit **Alabama.travel** today to book a vacation that hits a high note.

Sweet Home Alabama

PHOTOGRAPHS: AUBERGE RESORTS COLLECTION





stay » CATSKILLS, NEW YORK

Wildflower Farms

Step onto this picturesque Auberge Resorts Collection campus, in a meadow in the shadow of New York's iconic Shawangunk Mountains, and you feel almost as if you've entered the world of a Hudson River School painting. It's that pretty. And for all its comforts, which are considerable—the instant it opened its doors last fall, it became the premier luxury escape in the Catskills—the hotel rightly recognizes that nature is its greatest amenity. Located on a 140-acre site that was once a tree nursery and a dairy farm, Wildflower leans into the region's agricultural heritage with a working farm that supplies ingredients for cooking classes, the menu of the hotel's progressive New American restaurant, Clay, and many of the treatments at the excellent spa, Thistle. Guests can swing by to tour the crops, feed the animals, and collect eggs from the chicken coop (to take home or pass along to the kitchen staff at Clay to prepare for breakfast). Just 4 percent of the property has been developed, leaving an extensive network of forest trails for visitors to explore on their own or to visit with a guide for ramp planting or forest-bathing experiences. And it's easy to continue drinking in the beauty of the place from the 65 rooms, all freestanding cabins, cottages, and suites. In addition to offering fireplaces, well-curated minibars, and a stylishly warm, natural design aesthetic, they have extensive private terraces and floor-to-ceiling windows framing a view of woods, meadows, or mountains. *From $1,000; aubergeresorts.com*

Small Ship, Big Sea

Boutique vessels continue to be the hottest word in the cruise game. And this year, they made up the lion's share of launches to celebrate

The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection *Evrima*
It's no surprise that Ritz-Carlton's foray into glamour cruising is already raising the bar for the rest of the industry. *Evrima*'s 149 staterooms have balconies to help passengers catch glimpses of Barbados or the Med. But the largest points of difference are its choice of lesser-explored villages like Èze, and an open-air spa terrace that lets guests have massages with views of the shores passing by.

← *Seabourn Venture*
Launched last July, this expedition ship shows Seabourn's new commitment to the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Each of the 132 staterooms comes with a balcony, a walk-in closet, and a separate shower and tub. Even the 355-square-foot basic suites feel spacious.

Viking Osiris
Custom-built for the Nile, this petite ship has historical photography, Scandinavian accents, and designer spaces that give it the feel of a boutique hotel. From its airy two-story atrium—a rarity for river vessels—the 82 passengers can watch lush date palms and mango groves through full length windows.

Windstar *Star Pride*
This all-suite ship added new restaurants and reimagined staterooms in its renovation last year. With just 312 passengers, it feels intimate enough to be called a yacht. The vessel is so compact that it can glide through tiny waterways,like Greece's Corinth Canal. Guests can expect myriad perks, like swim platforms, which get unfurled on certain anchorings.

PHOTOGRAPH: SEABOURN CRUISE LINE

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stay » ITALY

W Rome

Prepare for a W like you've never seen before, located in the heart of Ludovisi—a posh, quiet neighborhood abutting the Villa Borghese and just an arancino's throw to the Spanish Steps. The brand's first outpost in Italy captures the exuberant, energetic vibe that W is known for but ditches the dark models-and-bottles aesthetic, opting instead for spaces that look as good by day as they did the night before, while striking the right mix of elevated and playful. Award-winning firm Meyer Davis oversaw the transformation of the property's two 19th-century palazzi, which now feel thoroughly modern thanks to natural light, pastel palettes, and an alfresco courtyard filled with greenery and fountains. The rooms—some with views onto the neighboring Swiss Institute's lavish gardens—have gorgeous herringbone wood floors, powder-blue walls with pink and navy furniture, and opulent marble bathrooms. But don't let the hotel's refined aesthetic fool you—this is still a place to see and be seen. Up on the rooftop you'll find a pool (that's more suited for snapping selfies than swimming laps) as well as one of Rome's only rooftop bars. At sunset, it becomes one of the most magical places in the entire Eternal City. *From about $535; marriott.com*

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVIDE LOVATTI

Santorini's Private Sanctuary

Impeccable views of the Aegean sea, a culinary concept by a Michelin chef, and a state-of-the-art spa.

Imagine waking up to serene stillness, peeling back your curtains to gaze into the deep cerulean waters of the Aegean sea. Imagine decompressing in an infinity pool while taking in the mesmerizing panoramic views just before heading to the spa, where you'll enjoy a carefully designed lava treatment inspired by the volcanic soils of Santorini. Imagine finishing your day with a mind-blowing meal curated by a Michelin chef at a chic restaurant. At **Magma Resort Santorini, part of The Unbound Collection by Hyatt**, this is only the start of your soul-awakening retreat.

Nestled in the quaint hilltop village of Vourvoulos lies the secluded sanctuary of your dreams, offering travelers the chance to rediscover their inner force. The hotel's contemporary design pays homage to Sanotrini's Pezoules, or traditional dwellings, while seamlessly integrating with the natural volcanic landscape surrounding the property. With 59 luxury rooms offering private verandas or terraces with private pools overlooking the Aegean sea, the ultimate elevated escape awaits. The property is just five minutes from Exo Gialos beach and 15 minutes from Fira and Oia.

It's impossible not to become fully immersed in the natural surroundings when they are this stunning—unbelievably blue waters, lava sand beaches, and sweeping vineyards adorning the landscape. Here, a stay is more than just another beachside getaway; it's a chance to trade from the chaos of daily life for something subtle and transformative; a chance to connect with the authentic essence of Santorini.

This vision is enabled through the property's distinctive offerings, all designed with a commitment to holistic wellness in mind. At Lava Spa and Wellness Center, the largest spa on the island, a menu of restorative treatments is intended to restore internal balance. The Big Blue treatment, a multi-sensorial massage for the body and face, will transform your inner and outer glow. When it comes to dining, an elite gastronomic experience calls. Curated by chef Arnaud Bignon of the Michelin-starred restaurant Spondi Athens, Magma by Spondi opens the door to a sophisticated culinary world celebrating the Earth's bounty. Impeccable service is consistent throughout your stay, with curated, authentic experiences available through the property's concierge team—wine tours, private sailing charters, and once-in-a-lifetime volcano tours are among guest favorites. For grandeur wedding receptions or intimate concepts, the Resort also offers endless possibilities to celebrate your eternal love story.

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eat » QUITO, ECUADOR

Foresta

The biophilic interiors of famed Ecuadoran chef Rodrigo Pacheco's conservation-focused restaurant give meals there the feeling of a dinner party in a chic greenhouse. Chefs prepare grilled prawns with spicy watermelon on massive volcanic-rock cooktops, and use ingredients like figs sourced from local Indigenous communities, making the experience even sweeter.

stay » OSLO

Sommerro

Sitting on an elegant tree-lined street in Frogner, one of Oslo's oldest neighborhoods, this 246-room hotel occupies a prominent 1930s building—the former headquarters of the city's first electricity company. The eclectic interiors are a decadent embellishment to the original mishmash of Art Deco and sober, functionalist details—from the handsome timber wall panels in one of the suites, the former director general's office, to the grand staircase in the lobby. Designed as a social hub with a roster of cultural events for visitors and Oslo locals, the ground floor is a sweep of humming restaurants and bars, plus a cinema and a theater. Meanwhile, the top floor, with sublime Oslo views, is home to a restaurant by Nordic sushi pioneer Frida Ronge as well as the city's first rooftop pool and sauna. A spacious subterranean wellness floor occupies the building's former public baths, where you'll find the original pool and a restored mosaic wall by Norwegian artist Per Krohg. What sets the hotel apart is its collaborators. From bathrobes by local bed-linen company Abate to tote bags and cushions from Sisters in Business, a sustainably focused social enterprise that employs immigrant women, Sommerro acts as a showcase for Oslo's relatively undiscovered brilliance. *From about $273; sommerrohouse.com*

PHOTOGRAPHS: GABRIELA SALINAS, FRANCISCO NOGUEIRA

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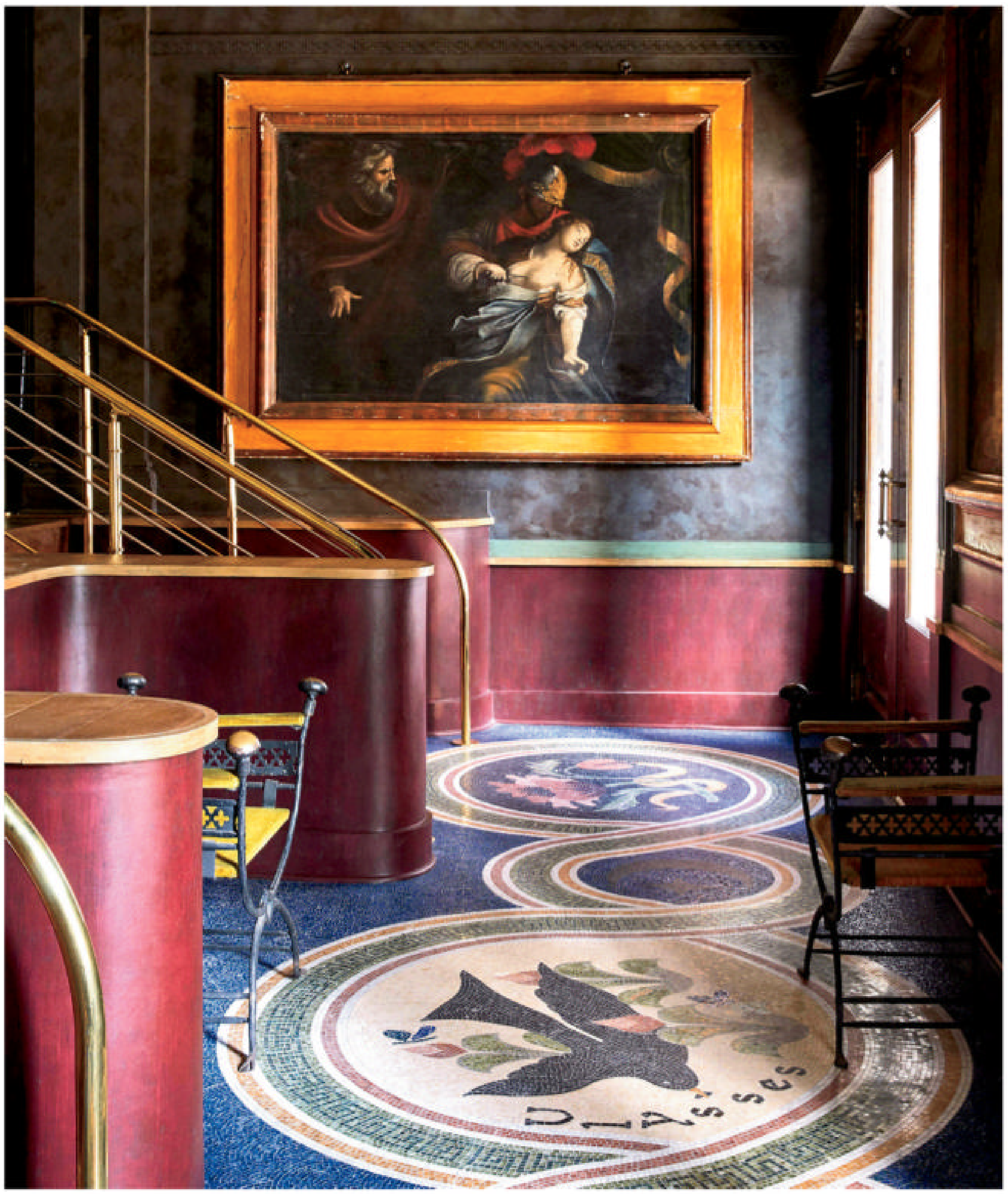

PHOTOGRAPH: BRETT WOOD

stay » BALTIMORE

Ulysses

The hotelier and design studio Ash loves to tell a good story. And the yarn that powers Ulysses pulls right from the hotel's roots. It occupies the nine-story Latrobe Building, an early 20th-century Italianate pile in Baltimore's vaguely European Mount Vernon neighborhood (see the cobblestone roundabouts and tidy greens), where upper-crust bachelor boarders once laid their heads. Today, the space once again conjures the quarters of some well-to-do gadabout whose trinkets—acquired from a parade of grand tours, no doubt—lie scattered all about. In the foyer, oil paintings with a tinge of the Goya grotesque hang above vivid mosaic floors. The rooms, appointed with antique (and antique-looking) furniture, occupy eight stories, with a palette that shifts depending on where you are: moody greens and blues on the lower levels; hazy yellow and red higher up. In a ninth-floor suite, the television, covered in fabric block-printed with flamingos, is a nod to native son John Waters. No proper boarding house is complete without common spaces, however. Nothing moves the spirit quite like Bloom's, a drinking den with mirrored ceilings and a bar in the round that makes every shake and stir feel like a performance. To that we say, bravo! *From $199; ash.world*

~~Mallorca:~~ *seen it*
~~Côte d'Azur:~~ *done it*
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hot list

stay » CALIFORNIA

Conrad Los Angeles

Frank Gehry's first U.S. hotel project occupies familiar territory for the famed architect: It sits across the street in Downtown L.A. from his iconic stainless steel Walt Disney Concert Hall—the home of the city's Philharmonic—which marks its 20th anniversary this fall. An ideal outpost for the culture-obsessed traveler, the Conrad is within walking distance of the Broad and MOCA, the Music Center, and Angels Flight Railway. Its entrance is an elevator that opens onto floor-to ceiling views of the Concert Hall's sinuous swooshes. Corner rooms offer similarly spectacular vistas, and on a clear day you can see all the way down to Dodger Stadium and the San Gabriel Mountains. But it's not just the exteriors that are top-notch. Extra touches in all of the spaces include full blackout shades, motion-activated night-lights under the beds, and Byredo Mojave Ghost bath products. The spa treatments are among the city's best, and considering there are five separate culinary experiences curated by chef José Andrés—from modernist cocktails at Sed and Spanish tapas at San Laurel to laid-back beachy rooftop dining at Agua Viva—this is the kind of hotel you'll never want to leave. *From $429; hilton.com*

eat » BANGKOK

Vilas

Can a dish inspired by a Spanish recipe using Japanese ingredients still be considered Thai? For chef Prin Polsuk, one of Bangkok's most acclaimed Thai chefs, it most certainly can. At his latest restaurant, a pared-back, pint-size dining room at the base of Bangkok's landmark King Power Mahanakhon tower, he draws inspiration from King Chulalongkorn's 1897 journey around Europe and the foreign ingredients and cooking techniques he subsequently added to the royal cookbooks. With the help of Spanish chef Pepe Dasí Jiménez, Polsuk creates seasonal 12-course menus that blur culinary borders. Expect plates such as southern Thai pork belly with coffee kombucha, jellied nam pla waan fish sauce with strawberry, and jamón-like salted tuna with honey-pickled melon.

PHOTOGRAPHS: THE INGALLS, DIEGO ARENAS, JOE THOMAS

visit » DOHA, QATAR

MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART

When the I. M. Pei–designed Museum of Islamic Art first opened in 2008, just months before Pei's 92nd birthday, it was the first major project in Qatar to set architecture-loving hearts aflutter. Now, after an extensive enhancement project, its dramatic interior spaces are looking better than ever. Spanning 1,400 years of history, the museum's galleries have been reimagined and reinstalled, introducing new visitor trails and child-friendly resources as well as more than 1,000 newly conserved or acquired objects displayed for the first time. There's also a new gallery exploring the building's creation story, which charts Pei's journeys through the Islamic world before he finally settled on the fountain at Cairo's Ibn Tulun Mosque as his inspiration for the museum.

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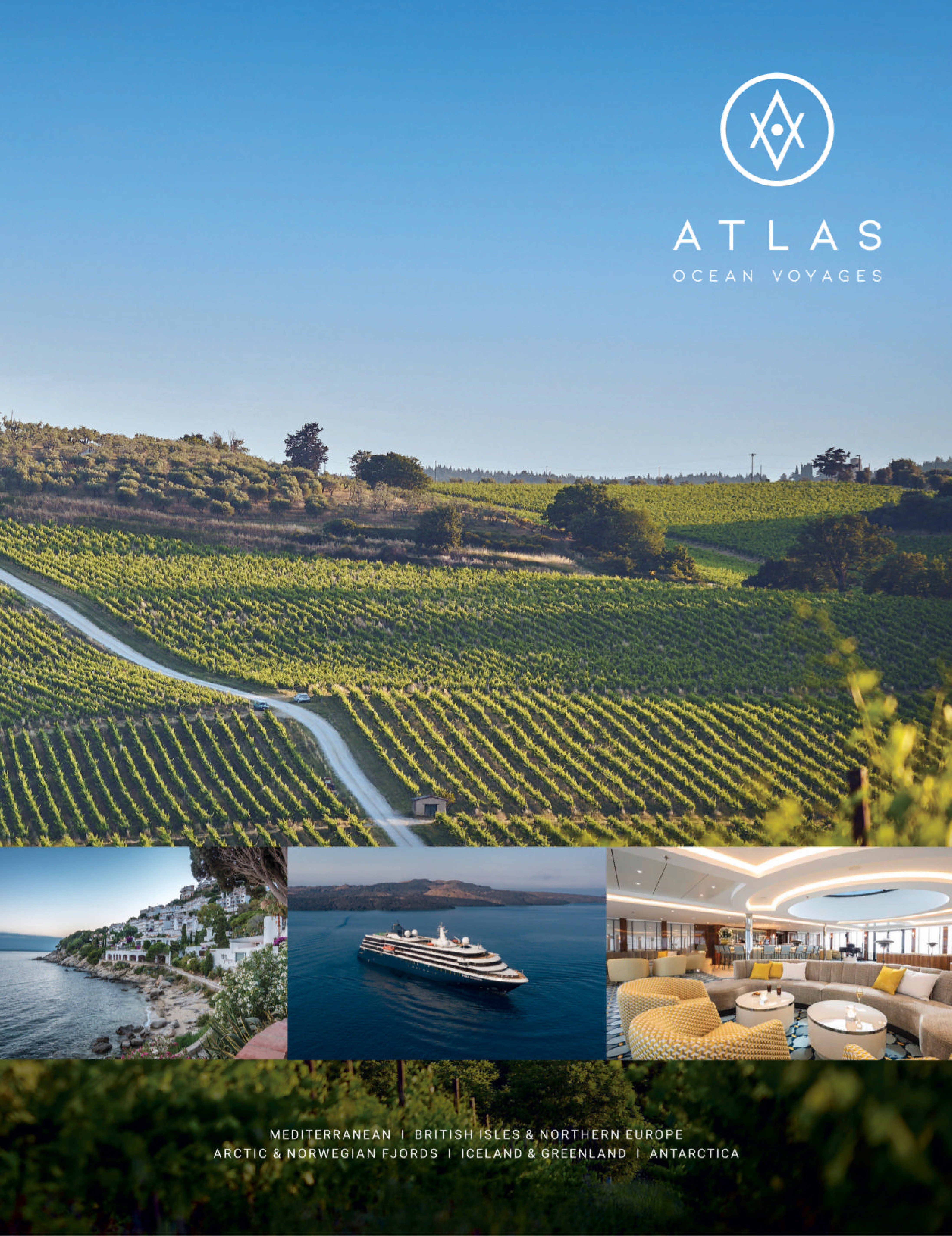

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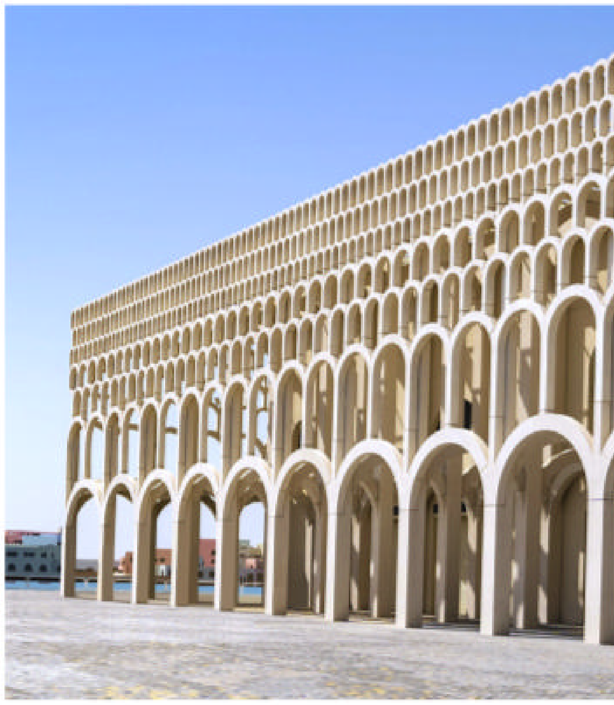
stay » MARRAKECH

Caravan Agafay

The rocky sparseness of Morocco's Agafay desert has long attracted travelers wanting a break from the sensory explosions of Marrakech. It's an ideal landing spot for the Habitas group, which since 2016 has been setting up their minimalist, sustainable eco-retreats in places like Mexico, Namibia, and Saudi Arabia. Their oasis among the lunar dunes eschews bells and whistles in favor of communal vibes and engagement with nature—or "luxury for the soul," as founders Oliver Ripley, Kfir Levy, and Eduardo Castillo call it. They have now applied their ethos to Agafay's 41 Berber-inspired tents and lodges. Each en suite tent—solar-powered, with eco-bathrooms—embodies stylish pared-downness: no minibars or TVs, just wood floors and earthy cream and ochre tones reminiscent of the regional rock. Like all Habitas retreats, Agafay uses light-impact building materials as much as possible, either upcycled or sourced locally, which are designed to blend into the landscape. Weekenders escaping European cities sink into poufs and Berber rugs inside the communal glass-wrapped lounge. On the semi-open dining veranda, beneath raffia lamps, they tuck into lamb slow-cooked in the underground oven before knocking back market sangrias by the open-air bar, silhouetted against the Atlas Mountains and flame red sunsets that give way to heavenly constellations. This is what travel is about—less guilt and more meaning amid tranquility, good conversation, and cleansing nature. *From $353; ourhabitas.com*



go » QATAR

Doha Grand Cruise Terminal

Qatar's art-filled Hamad International Airport is regularly voted among the world's best by air travelers, and now passengers arriving by sea will be greeted in similar style at the just-launched Doha Grand Cruise Terminal. Opened just before the FIFA World Cup, the new facility sprawls along the water's edge near the city center. It is able to host two mega-ships simultaneously, with a capacity to welcome 12,000 passengers per day. In a nod to traditional Arabian architecture, the building's sand-colored façade features rows of repeated arches, creating dramatic contrasts of light and shadow. There's an art gallery, a large open-air rooftop terrace, and, perhaps most thrillingly, an escalator for arriving passengers that passes through a vast aquarium before emerging into the bright Doha sunshine.

PHOTOGRAPHS: KLEINJAN GROENEWALD, DOHA GRAND CRUISE TERMINAL

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Escape Artists

These four far-flung beachfront retreats—made for reading in the shade and afternoon swims—are sure to make everyday stresses disappear

Regent Phu Quoc

Stunning beaches, quaint fishing villages, and a constellation of coral-fringed islets offshore: Phu Quoc is Vietnam's answer to Thailand's big-hitter islands like Koh Samui. This all-villas-and-suites property signals a new start for the Regent brand. With a fresh teak-and-marble aesthetic and an enviable spot on palm-studded Long Beach, it's a comeback story in the making.

← Casa Chablé

This latest outpost from Mexican-owned Chablé Hotels is the only high-end hotel inside the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO-designated coastal wonderland of tropical birds, manatees, and jaguars. The 45-minute boat ride from Tulum takes guests through the Reserve's vast lagoon, in the company of dolphins and egrets. With only 10 rooms, the stillness is astounding.

The Sanubari

Located on the southwestern coast of Sumba island, it's the kind of toes-in-the-sand spot you dream about when coming to Indonesia. There's a thatched-roof beach bar where guests with tousled hair toast après-surf Bintang beers, a breezy restaurant serving excellent nasi gorengs, and not another building in sight.

W Costa Navarino

You pass through the olive-dotted Peloponnesian countryside, past octogenarians driving ancient tractors, to reach this 32-acre property conceived to look like a Greek coastal village. The first W Hotel in Greece, it fuses fun (a poolside DJ) with wellness (a roster of fitness classes and a great spa), alongside eco-conscious design.

PHOTOGRAPH: CASA CHABLÉ

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Meet Your New Favorite City

In Greenville, South Carolina, small-town charm meets big-city sensibilities

Downtown Greenville at Sunset

Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail

The Peace Pavilion

Whoever said it was impossible to have it all never visited Greenville. Nestled at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains in South Carolina's Upcountry, this vibrant city has become a mainstay for travelers in recent years—and for good reason. With a globally inspired culinary scene, generous natural landscapes, and a thriving arts community, one visit to Greenville will leave you wondering why you'd never visited before.

> **"Greenville is a wonderful gem of a city."**
>
> — *Condé Nast Traveler* reader

It begins on Main Street in the bustling heart of downtown, where tree-lined streets are filled with unexpected art, diverse eateries—over 110 different nationally renowned restaurants in downtown alone—and cool, locally owned shops. Hop on the free trolley or explore the area on foot—it's perfectly walkable.

All around Greenville, you'll get a taste of its worldly food scene that rivals that of any large city. Delight your palate with a zesty Persian kebab at Pomegranate on Main, a traditional Georgian cheese bread at Keipi, or a rich paella at Abanico.

> **"Breathtaking. Enough said."**
>
> — *Condé Nast Traveler* reader

Despite the big-city restaurant quality, Greenville doesn't sport the same nonstop bustle as its larger counterparts. Instead of skyscrapers and endless traffic, expect gently flowing waterfalls and plenty of opportunities to connect with the natural landscape. In the heart of downtown, Falls Park offers refuge among modernity. Liberty Bridge towers over the exposed waterfalls below, beckoning visitors to slow down and take it all in.

Downtown offers easy access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail, a 22-mile, multiuse path running alongside the Reedy River. Alongside the scenic route lies picturesque stop-off points, parks, and a handful of breweries and restaurants culminating at the charming Travelers Rest area.

> **"Culture reigns large in Greenville: music, crafts, and fine arts."**
>
> — *Condé Nast Traveler* reader

Walking around Greenville is like a visit to a large, open-air art museum, with collections of original, multi-format artworks scattered all along the streets. Museums like the Greenville County Museum of Art house impressive collections of historic American art for endless gazing and admiration.

It doesn't end there—thrilling performances and live experiences await all around the city. Catch a touring broadway show at the Peace Center, an indie film screening at Coffee Underground, or a storied play at Centre Stage's theater.

yeah, that greenville
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SOUTH CAROLINA

stay » LAKE COMO, ITALY

Passalacqua

From a pale amber estate, seven acres of olive groves, roses, mimosa, jasmine, and magnolia descend to the glittering waters of Lake Como, wafting their fragrances into the sleepy air. A perfectly confected 24-suite hotel born of a 1787 neoclassical villa, Passalacqua is the second Como spot for the De Santis family, after their beloved Grand Hotel Tremezzo. The suites in the villa have baroque details like original frescoes and ceiling carvings. Como silks, etched Barbini mirrored cabinets, and Bordoni leather ottoman tables painted by hand join Bottega Conticelli vintage-style steamer trunks, which conceal televisions that guests watch while ensconced in billowy Beltrami linens. The rest of the suites are divided between the eight-suite Palazz—the repurposed ancient stables that now have hand-stenciled damask walls—and, down by the lake, the four-suite Casa al Lago, an updated 1970s house with silk walls and bronze light fittings that is also available for exclusive use. The Palazz contains a small spa stocked with Dr. Barbara Sturm products, with hand-painted wallpaper that replicates that of Portaluppi Herbarium in Milan's Atellani House. Guests congregate on the colorful swimming terrace for unfussy Lombardy lunches. There, the sage green 200-year-old greenhouse and jaunty La DoubleJ–designed floral parasols offer a cheeky riposte to the formal villa interiors. Passalacqua deliciously recaptures the lost art of villeggiatura, or taking to a country villa and reveling in il dolce far niente—sweet idleness. *From $835; passalacqua.it*

PHOTOGRAPHS: MADELINE LU, DESIGNMUSEUM DANMARK, SILVERSEA CRUISES

visit » COPENHAGEN

DESIGNMUSEUM DANMARK

Building a museum from scratch is a Herculean endeavor, but renewing a legacy museum is no easy feat either. Last summer, the DesignMuseum Danmark reopened its doors after a two-year renovation, its most exhaustive since it introduced its Ivar Bentsen and Kaare Klint–designed spaces to the public in 1926. This reimagining, helmed by the local firm OEO Studio, imbues the historic building with contemporary ideas but leaves room for Klint and Bentsen's legacy, from the vintage lamps that line the rooms to the tiny design details seen in every corner, even the locker rooms. That juxtaposition of traditional craftsmanship and modern concerns is also evident in the museum's displays: Its historical collections (tsubas, snuffboxes, and plenty of chairs) sit alongside exhibitions that address contemporary global challenges like climate change. Finally, no visit is complete without an amble through the museum's courtyard garden, with its linden trees and sculptures, and a visit to its gift shop, packed with books and ceramics you'll want for your home.

cruise » SILVERSEA

Silver Dawn

A plush robe and slippers are status symbols for the passengers gliding aboard the *Silver Dawn*. After all, this is one of Silversea's three ships with Otium, the line's newly imagined wellness concept, which weaves tranquil moments into the entire onboard experience, even beyond its smashing new spa with Roman-style baths. In the rooms, guests can sink into a fig-and-cedar-scented aromatherapy bath as Bach plays softly in the background and candles flicker. Peckish? Your private butler can score you spa-menu favorites, like lobster brioche or truffled popcorn. Culinary venues popular on other Silversea ships—like S.A.L.T. Kitchen and upscale French La Dame—have been expanded here. Coupled with foodie-focused shore excursions that whisk you to beloved local hangouts, they make this vessel a luxury-ship game changer. *From $3,150; silversea.com*

stay » NEW YORK CITY

Ritz-Carlton, NoMad

During New York Fashion Week, the Ritz-Carlton New York, NoMad's rooftop bar, Nubeluz by José Andrés, hosted a runway show for Bronx and Banco, with a downtown-cool vibe and guest list to match—think actor Natasha Lyonne and rapper Coi Leray. Seemingly overnight, Nubeluz was cemented as a New York hot spot. This is just one example of how this legacy brand is reshaping and modernizing its image. How did a hotel conglomerate (thought by some to be a bit buttoned-up) create a hotel that is both familiar to its loyal clientele and alluring to a new generation? The answers are found within the atrium-like lobby, reservation-impossible Mediterranean restaurant Zaytinya, rooms with epic city views, and a skin-tightening subterranean spa. Each space mixes current design trends, like handblown Randy Zieber light fixtures and black Italian-marble walls, with the exceptional, discreet service that the Ritz-Carlton is known for. New York, a city made for reinvention, is the perfect place for Ritz-Carlton to introduce its new attitude. *From $895; ritzcarlton.com*

eat » DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Jun's

In some ways, chef Kelvin Cheung embodies the Dubai dream: He touched down in the city after stints at celebrated restaurants across Canada, the US, Belgium, and India, bringing with him the global sensibility with which the UAE has become synonymous. His menu at Jun's reflects his cosmopolitan outlook, packing flavors he's picked up along the way into sophisticated spins on comfort fare: tempura za'atar chaat with tamarind, yogurt, and avocado; red-hot chicken karaage with waffles; lobster pani puri with achaar; lamb koobideh tsukune; and rainbow heirloom carrots with smoked labneh and soy honey butter. But the real star here may well be Cheung himself, a natural raconteur who makes an effort to come by each table to share the spellbinding stories behind each dish. When the weather is nice, grab a seat on the patio in the shadow of the sparkling spire of the Burj Khalifa—it doesn't get more Dubai than that.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JOE THOMAS, JUN'S

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hot list

eat » ATLANTA

La Semilla

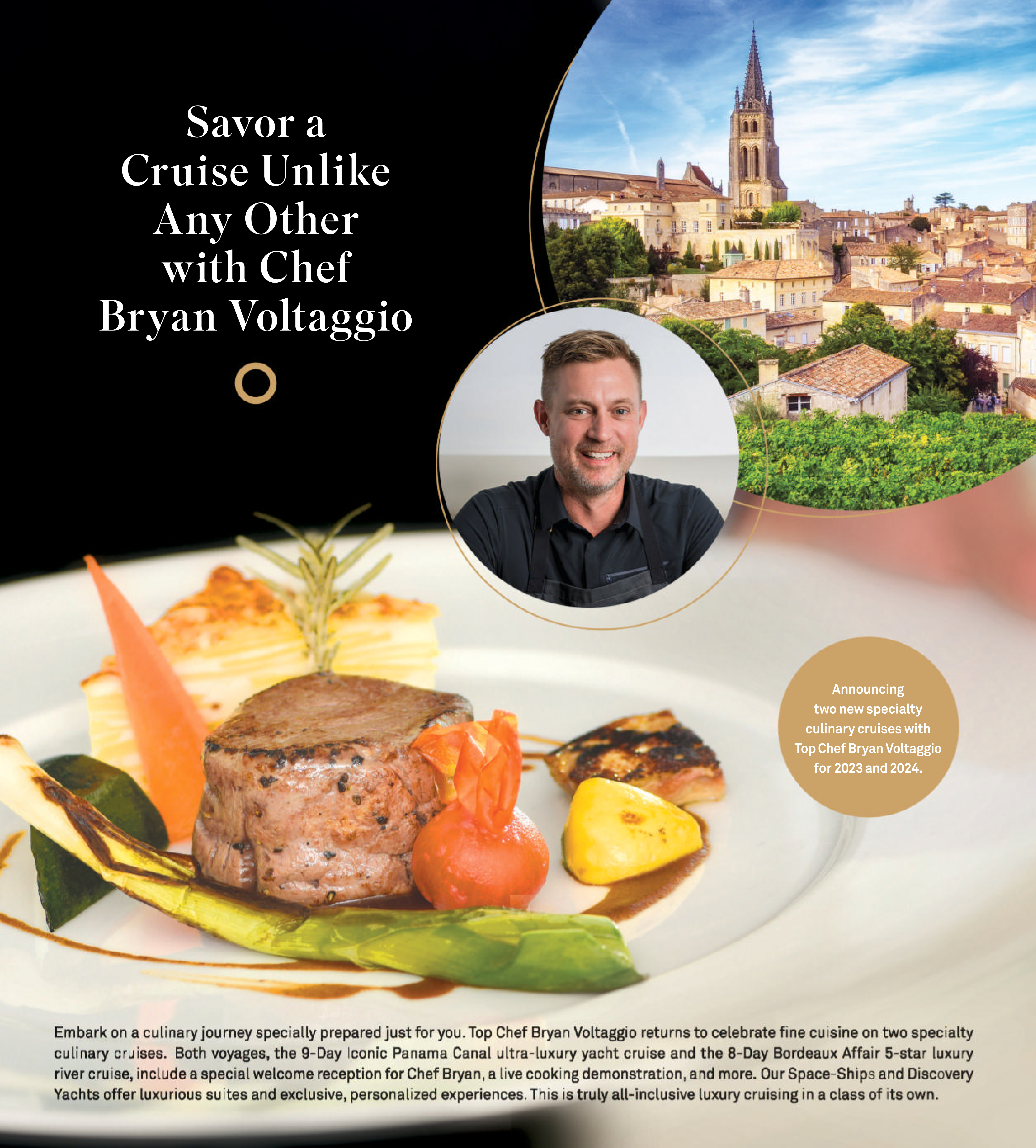
This little tropical enclave in the Reynoldstown neighborhood serves up some of the tastiest plant-based dishes in the city. Married duo Sophia Marchese and chef Reid Trapani filled the space with whimsical personal touches, such as vintage decor and hand-painted banana leaves on the bar's soffit. Marchese oversees the beverage program with drinks befitting the locale, like the agricole fashioned with rum, mole bitters, and Angostura. Trapani's dishes pay homage to Marchese's Cuban heritage and his travels to Latin America. There's a vegan Cubano with house-made seitan and jackfruit lechón, but the star of the menu may be the bistec de palomilla made with local lion's-mane mushrooms.

stay » MEXICO

Waldorf Astoria Cancún

For all the resorts that crowd Mexico's east coast, the Waldorf stands out for its truly white-glove service and amenities that make it hard to leave the property. There are infinity pools aplenty, acres of pristine coastline, and that most glorious asset of all, the feeling of complete privacy in one of the country's most bustling vacation spots. The decor, a soothing sea of creams and sand hues, spotlights Mexican artisans and highlights materials like tropical woods and local stone. The vibe here is palpably slow—no rushing from one activity to the next, just relaxing. And there are enough private cabanas to go around—you can forget about the dreaded visit to the pool at dawn to reserve a great spot. There are also dozens of lounge chairs facing the beach for when the ocean is your dip du jour. With comfortable yet polished rooms, an excellent spa, and a clutch of bars and restaurants serving modern riffs on traditional dishes and drinks, this is Cancún like you've never seen it. *From $875; hilton.com*

PHOTOGRAPHS: ASHLEY WILSON, VICTOR ELIAS



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stay » MENDOZA, ARGENTINA

SB Winemaker's House & Spa Suites

Mendoza has long been a magnet for well-heeled Malbec lovers, so Susana Balbo, Argentina's first female enologist, has done the logical thing and created a swank retreat there for oenophiles. Together with daughter Ana Lovaglio Balbo, she refurbished a century-old property in Chacras de Coria, blending well-being with art, haute cuisine, and a plethora of winemaking references across the seven exquisite suites. It's Ana's former home, so she knows every nook and cranny, and her eye for detail honed by winemaking has translated well, as evinced by touches like the wellness butler who organizes in-room experiences, the thought-provoking Espejos mirror collection by renowned Argentine artist Julio Le Parc, furniture from female designers, and even heated sun loungers and firepits on each private patio. Meals are a focal point; at lunch, don't miss the entraña (skirt steak), grilled your way over open flames at the outdoor parrilla counter and best enjoyed alongside Susana's very own Nosotros Malbec 2018. Come dinner, book a table at La Vida restaurant and sample the paired 14-course tasting menu created by chef Flavia Amad Di Leo. After a day around the swimming pool or sipping and swirling in local vineyards (the family's Susana Balbo Wines bodega in Agrelo is a must-visit), kick back in extremely comfortable living quarters. Each suite has a wet room or a soaking tub (the ingeniously upcycled egg-shaped wine fermentation tank), and opening a Torrontés from the generously stocked minibar to savor in a bubble bath is a perfect way to end the day. *From $839; susanabalbohotels.com*

go » AIRPORTS

Get there early

Increasingly, airport terminals are feeling more like high-end malls with luxury boutiques, million-dollar art installations, and outposts of celebrity-chef restaurants than utilitarian passageways to departure gates. These creature comforts are becoming the new norm for New Yorkers, with two of the area's major hubs competing for the most bells and whistles: LaGuardia's Terminal C and Newark's Terminal A have been completely reimagined. LaGuardia's C, a Delta hub, is now home to the brand's largest Sky Club, while Newark's A is doubling down on Jersey pride, commissioning the state's arts community for installations as well as bringing in a number of locally loved restaurants and shops (including a Jersey Mike's Subs stop). On the other coast, at Los Angeles International, Delta's first phase of a $2.3 billion investment premiered last year at Terminal 3 with a video-gaming area and access to a new Sky Club with the rare outdoor space. Farther afield, airports are creating large green spaces, only indoors—like the Orchard, a 60,000-square-foot atrium garden with 300 trees and 25,000 plants at the newly expanded Doha Hamad International Airport in Qatar.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SB WINEMAKER'S HOUSE & SPA SUITES, PORT AUTHORITY PRESS

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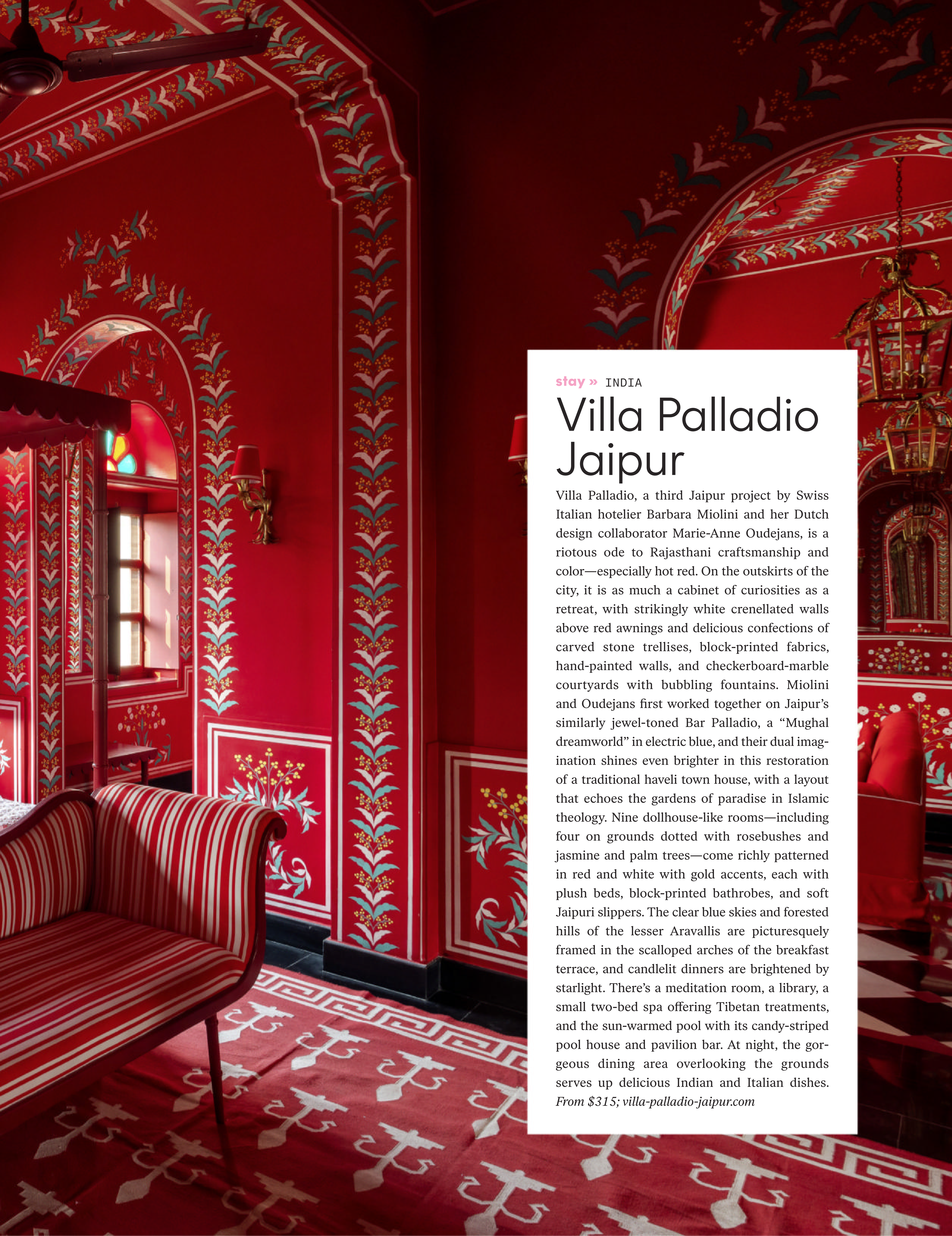

stay » INDIA

Villa Palladio Jaipur

Villa Palladio, a third Jaipur project by Swiss Italian hotelier Barbara Miolini and her Dutch design collaborator Marie-Anne Oudejans, is a riotous ode to Rajasthani craftsmanship and color—especially hot red. On the outskirts of the city, it is as much a cabinet of curiosities as a retreat, with strikingly white crenellated walls above red awnings and delicious confections of carved stone trellises, block-printed fabrics, hand-painted walls, and checkerboard-marble courtyards with bubbling fountains. Miolini and Oudejans first worked together on Jaipur's similarly jewel-toned Bar Palladio, a "Mughal dreamworld" in electric blue, and their dual imagination shines even brighter in this restoration of a traditional haveli town house, with a layout that echoes the gardens of paradise in Islamic theology. Nine dollhouse-like rooms—including four on grounds dotted with rosebushes and jasmine and palm trees—come richly patterned in red and white with gold accents, each with plush beds, block-printed bathrobes, and soft Jaipuri slippers. The clear blue skies and forested hills of the lesser Aravallis are picturesquely framed in the scalloped arches of the breakfast terrace, and candlelit dinners are brightened by starlight. There's a meditation room, a library, a small two-bed spa offering Tibetan treatments, and the sun-warmed pool with its candy-striped pool house and pavilion bar. At night, the gorgeous dining area overlooking the grounds serves up delicious Indian and Italian dishes. *From $315; villa-palladio-jaipur.com*

Undiscovered Wyoming

Pristine wilderness peppered with the spirit of the Old West—there is so much more to the Cowboy State than initially meets the eye.

Flaming Gorge

Serenity and solitude. Landscapes that change before your very eyes, from rolling prairie plains to lush alpine forests to snow-capped mountain ranges. The bold, adventurous spirit of the Old American West. There is no place on Earth quite like Wyoming, and the best way to experience the 44th state in its full, rugged glory is by channeling your inner explorer—traversing new lands and taking the path less trodden en route to the wondrous landscapes that await.

While visions of Wyoming may conjure images of the state's two benchmark national parks, there is so much more to discover during your visit. Those lesser-known corners of Wyoming offer what Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Park do not: an opportunity to connect with the land beneath your feet in relative stillness. A chance to relish in the quiet and soak in the stunning beauty without the crowds. A moment to exhale.

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest

Wherever you choose to venture your journey doesn't end there, for the scenic drives connecting each region of Wyoming offer an experience in and of itself. Sit back and watch the ever-evolving landscape shift as you drive from north to south, east to west.

Tucked away in the northeastern corner of Wyoming is **Devils Tower**, a stunning geological feature rising nearly 900 feet out of the prairie. Though it's America's first official National Monument, Devils Tower has a storied history steeped in rich Native American culture long predating the American settlement. In fact, the site is still an active sacred place for dozens of Native American tribes today. Visitors can learn about the history of the site and its cultural significance while also enjoying a myriad of outdoor activities, from hiking to climbing to stargazing.

Bordering Utah in the southwestern corner of Wyoming is the aquatic wonder **Flaming Gorge**. Here, red canyon walls and generous green forests offer a perfectly scenic escape for water lovers in the landlocked state. The Flaming Gorge Reservoir offers 91 miles of water-based recreation including boating, fishing, kayaking, wakeboarding, and more. Mountain bikers will find an array of exciting, well-maintained trails bordering the reservoir.

Driving north from there will eventually land you in **Shoshone National Forest**, the first national forest in the United States. Take the Buffalo Bill Cody Scenic Byway, considered one of the most beautiful drives in the country, and follow the North Fork of the Shoshone River through the Wapiti Valley. Shoshone is like an introduction to the larger Bridger-Teton National Forest—just as stunning, but quieter and less crowded. Grizzly bears, black bears, an impressive array of wildlife, and varied terrain are all major draws to the area.

Finally, driving to the southwestern corner of the state brings you to one of Wyoming's best-kept secrets, **Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest**. With vastly varied terrain and elevations, the forest is a true playground for all seasons. Skiing and snowshoeing dominate in the winter months, but there is also endless recreation in the warmer months—everything from fishing to mountain biking to hiking.

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stay » AUSTRALIA

Ace Hotel Sydney

Hipster-hotel titan Ace has spent two decades establishing itself as a shortcut to cities around the world. Its first location in the Southern Hemisphere, in Sydney's city center in the cool-kid neighborhood of Surry Hills, doesn't disappoint. Eighteen stories high with 257 rooms, it is housed in a magnificent early-20th-century building that vibrates with creative energy. Revived by Flack Studio, Australia's most in-demand interior architects, the onetime brick factory has complemented its high ceilings, exposed brick, and concrete walls with one-of-a-kind furniture, art, and bric-a-brac by the country's best designers, artists, and makers. The deeply comfortable rooms come in varying sizes, some with terraces, living rooms, and marble-clad bathrooms with deep bathtubs and kitchens; all rooms are soundproofed, and some have turntables and vinyl. By day, the lobby, an homage to 1970s suburbia with a sunken lounge in burnt orange and tan, is busy with freelancers fueled by flat whites. At night, the lights dim, the DJs move in, and the olive-leaf martinis start flowing from the ochre-and-red marble bar. Elsewhere there is a wine bar, Good Chemistry, a striking mint-green terrazzo-and-tadelakt space that champions natural vintages. Upstairs, the restaurant Kiln has a retractable roof and design by Fiona Lynch featuring linen walls painted with colorful Pollock-esque splotches. The popular local chef Mitch Orr delivers an on-trend wood-fired menu, which diners can enjoy while surveying every corner of Sydney's cityscape. *From $290; acehotel.com*

eat » RIO DE JANEIRO

Lasai

Though it is mere feet from its original address in the city's vibrant Botafogo neighborhood, the second edition of Lasai bears little resemblance to its former self. For starters, lauded chef Rafa Costa e Silva now serves only 10 diners per service in a modern, intimate room rather than in the historic town house that seated more than four times as many guests. His vegetable-focused dishes, made with produce he grows in his own gardens and on his nearby farms, are still showstoppers, but he's upped the ante by incorporating delectable ingredients like sea urchin and ikura into his dishes. Here's one case where downsizing has produced an undeniable upgrade.

PHOTOGRAPHS: ANSON SMART, RODRIGO AZEVEDO

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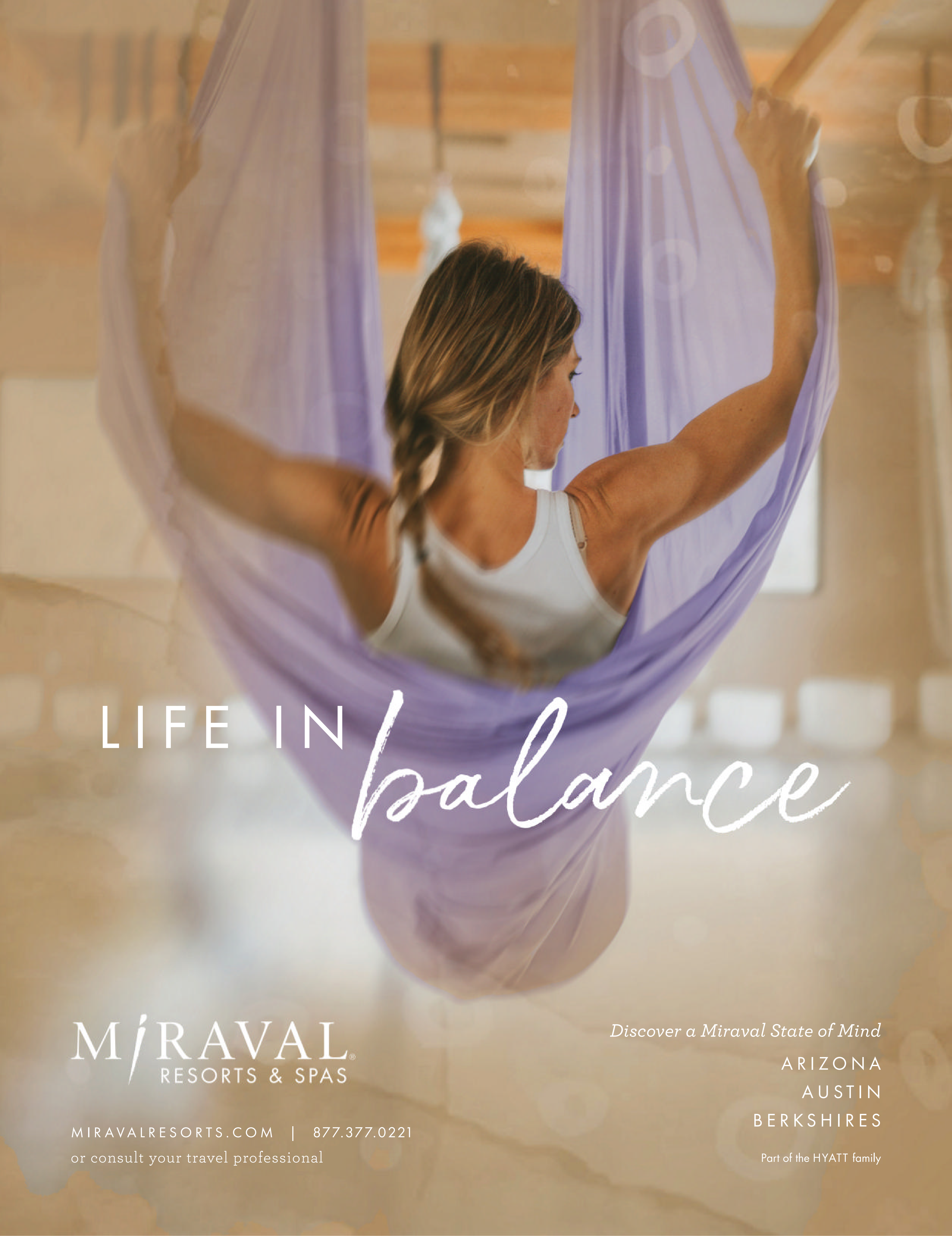
eat » PHILADELPHIA

Her Place Supper Club

Back when she was a student at the University of Pennsylvania, Amanda Shulman threw elaborate dinner parties for her classmates. Eight years later, with stints at Vetri Cucina and Momofuku Ko under her belt, the chef channels a similarly convivial vibe at Her Place, a supper club in Center City, Philadelphia, serving a family-style tasting menu in a snug dining room that hums with conversation and a soundtrack of ’80s hits. Throughout the evening, Shulman pops in from the open kitchen to introduce dishes like chicken liver and apple butter–spiked gougères, lemony hand-rolled pasta, and paper-thin slices of roast beef served with a tangle of crispy fries. At the end of the meal, she floats among the tables like any good host, sending off her guests with a tray of warm chocolate chip cookies.

PHOTOGRAPHS: TED NGHIEM



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← The Standard, Bangkok Mahanakhon
This glossy newcomer has injected an overdue sense of playfulness into the city's luxury-hotel scene. Spanish designer Jaime Hayon's vision is a sensory delight: Elevators with infinity mirrors lead to a canary-yellow lobby and on to The Parlor, which at sundown transitions from digital-nomad hangout to a space for cocktails and DJ sets.

Hôtel Dame Des Arts
The 360-degree views of Paris from the rooftop bar alone are reason to book this Latin Quarter charmer. Its 109 rooms are at once spartan and spoiling, chic and subdued, with deft touches like the eau-de-nil tiles and the juxtaposition of straight and curved lines throughout. It's all discreetly sensuous.

The Madrid Edition
The Spanish capital's hotel scene has seen a flurry of top openings, but this Ian Schrager cocreation is the cream of the crop. It's a big, bold vision of high-church minimalism where public spaces have a low-lit calm but go all out for contrast—like a traditional shawl draped over a sleek bench. The 200 rooms are pure-white chambers of soundproofed silence.

Casa Polanco
A stay at this elegantly renovated Spanish Revival–style mansion in Mexico City's tony Polanco neighborhood feels like a peek inside the lives of well-to-do locals. Instead of classic heritage motifs, this 19-room bolt-hole feels fresh with clean lines, lots of neutrals, and a surprising prep-school flavor.

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS SCHALKX

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hot list

eat » TOKYO

The Jade Room + Garden Terrace

The words *custard* and *bread* sit comfortably alongside *miso* and *yuzu* on the menu here—offering a clue into the British-meets-Japanese innovations that lie behind the cuisine at the new signature restaurant at The Tokyo Edition, Toranomon. The first Japan venture for London chef Tom Aikens, the restaurant hovers on the cloud-brushing 31st floor of the Kengo Kuma–designed hotel. The space is as sleek and shiny as the creative clientele: walnut paneling tempered by a spectrum of greens (from the jade velvet seats and John Jackson paintings to a cornucopia of plants). The restaurant flows onto a relaxed Garden Terrace (a rare rooftop luxury in Tokyo), with distractingly sweeping urban views. Tear your eyes away and you'll be rewarded with Aikens's culinary magic in dishes like the roast piglet belly with squid, pineapple, and vanilla—a deliciously modern riff on the old-school British classic gammon and pineapple.

go »

Right On Track

It's been a banner year for trains—but not the gilded, romantic throwback sort that have recently been making a comeback. To be more precise, this was a big year for the *future* of trains, with enormous rail projects reaching completion in the unlikeliest of places. South Florida's ambitious Brightline between Miami and West Palm Beach added two new stations, in Boca Raton and Aventura, and is slated to extend all the way to Orlando later in 2023. Across the country in Los Angeles, the K Line light rail service connecting Jefferson Park and Westchester opened its first phase in late 2022 and is set to connect to LAX next year, theoretically making it possible to—gasp!—get around Los Angeles without a car. Just in time for summer, Amtrak adjusted its northeast Empire Service route to offer Berkshire Flyer trains on weekends between Manhattan's Moynihan Train Hall and Pittsfield, Massachusetts. In Switzerland, the TikTok set is devouring the new Golden Pass Express for its scenic Bernese Oberland views—but train nerds are obsessing over its unique ability to change its wheel gauge and coach height to accommodate variations in rails and platforms along the route. Further north, Swedish train operator SJ launched daily overnight service between Stockholm and Hamburg, with seasonal extensions to Berlin. Add it all up, and it feels like this form of slow travel is growing faster than ever.

visit » AUSTRALIA

SYDNEY MODERN PROJECT

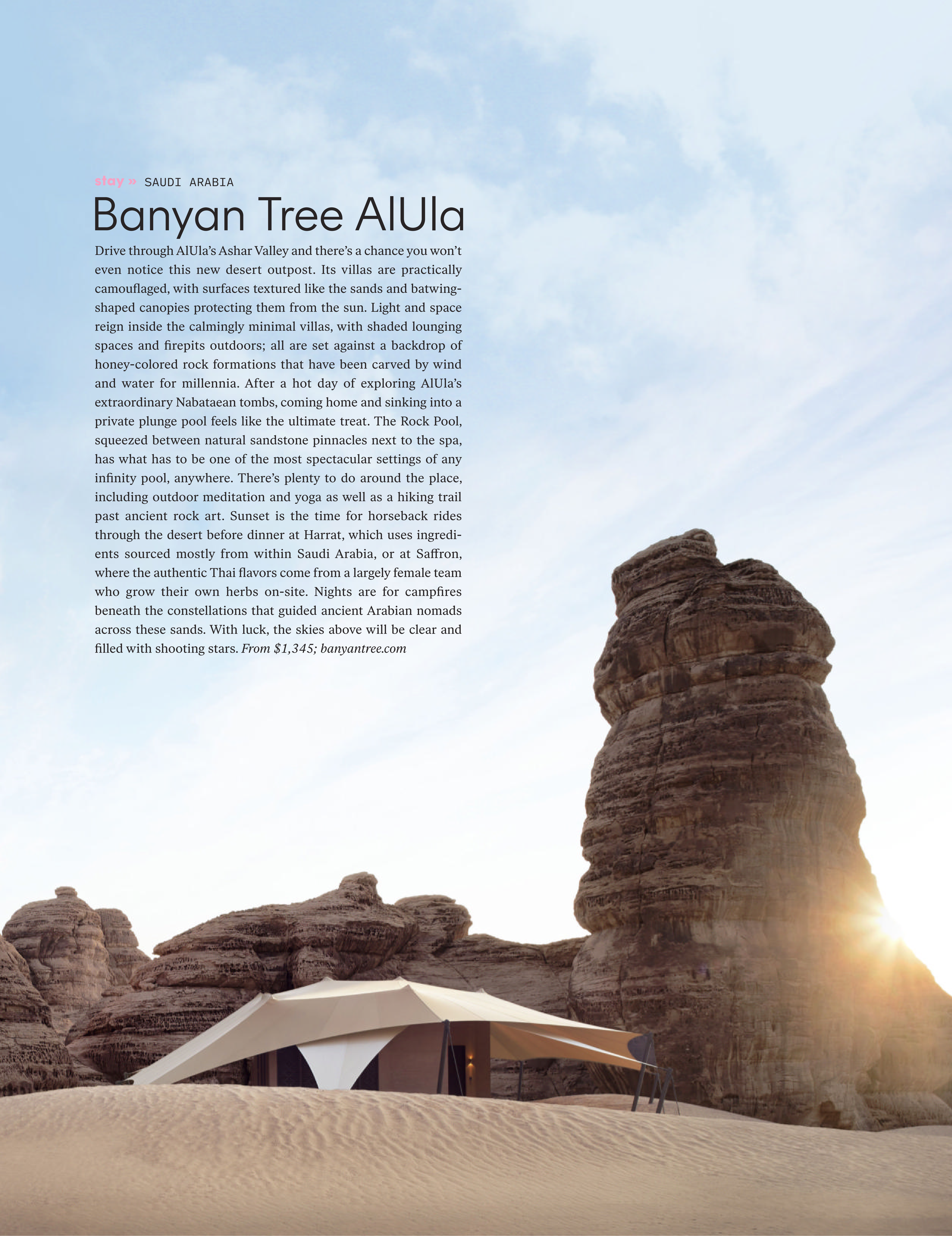
`One hundred and fifty years after opening its doors, the Art Gallery of New South Wales has received a major redevelopment and expansion. The most notable addition to the institution, which has historically focused on European artworks, is the Sydney Modern Project, which nearly doubled the museum's square footage. Designed by the Japanese architecture firm SANAA, the stand-alone building includes the Yiribana Gallery, a space dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art.`

PHOTOGRAPHS: JADE ROOM, IWAN BAAN, CHRISTOPHER CYPERT

stay » SAUDI ARABIA

Banyan Tree AlUla

Drive through AlUla's Ashar Valley and there's a chance you won't even notice this new desert outpost. Its villas are practically camouflaged, with surfaces textured like the sands and batwing-shaped canopies protecting them from the sun. Light and space reign inside the calmingly minimal villas, with shaded lounging spaces and firepits outdoors; all are set against a backdrop of honey-colored rock formations that have been carved by wind and water for millennia. After a hot day of exploring AlUla's extraordinary Nabataean tombs, coming home and sinking into a private plunge pool feels like the ultimate treat. The Rock Pool, squeezed between natural sandstone pinnacles next to the spa, has what has to be one of the most spectacular settings of any infinity pool, anywhere. There's plenty to do around the place, including outdoor meditation and yoga as well as a hiking trail past ancient rock art. Sunset is the time for horseback rides through the desert before dinner at Harrat, which uses ingredients sourced mostly from within Saudi Arabia, or at Saffron, where the authentic Thai flavors come from a largely female team who grow their own herbs on-site. Nights are for campfires beneath the constellations that guided ancient Arabian nomads across these sands. With luck, the skies above will be clear and filled with shooting stars. *From $1,345; banyantree.com*



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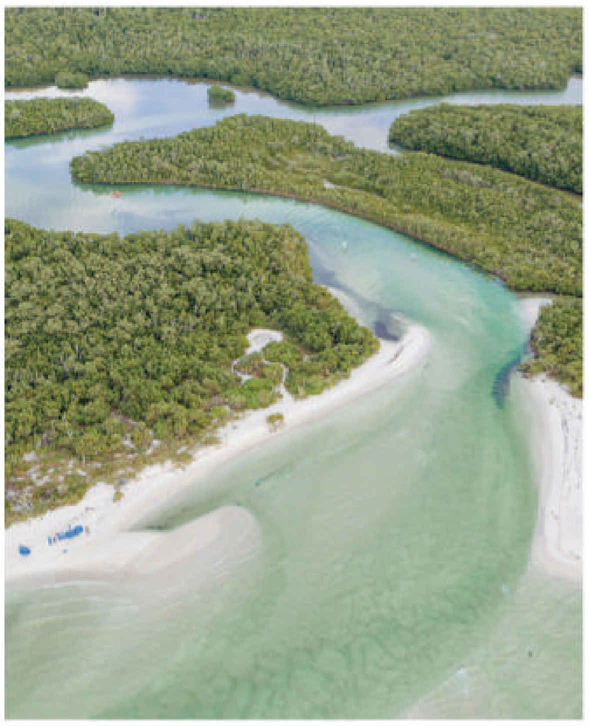

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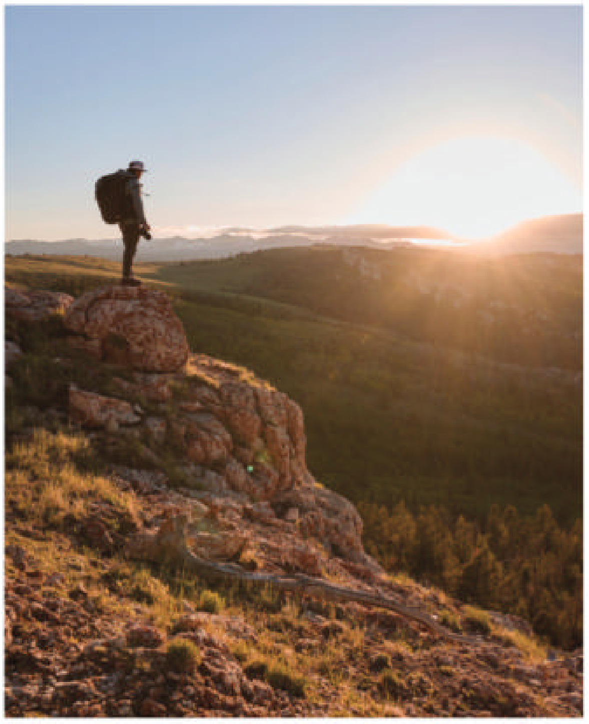

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There's a real sense of arrival once you cross the Overseas Highway to reach Key Largo in the Florida Keys. As Route 1 heads south from Miami and the urban sprawl slowly dissipates, the road carries you over vast, open Everglades and then shoots you out over the blue waters of Florida Bay. In barely an hour, you've gone from one of America's largest cities to a tropical paradise (no passport required). Key Largo is a place of immense natural beauty, where palm trees and turquoise waters await—and there is truly something for everyone to explore. It's a short journey, but feels worlds away. You're here. Let the adventures begin.

It begins with the landscapes. This coral archipelago is unlike anything else in the country, offering a blend of tropical wetlands, limestone outcroppings, and sandy beaches. The Keys are home to a number of endemic plant and animal species, some of which are found nowhere else in the world. It's hard to believe that such a getaway exists in our own backyard—and inspiring to think of everything you can discover here.

For the adventurous, Key Largo is a must-visit. This is considered one of the great diving capitals of the world, and home to the USS Spiegel Grove, a military ship purposely sunk to create a restorative artificial reef. The nearby John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, the first undersea park in the U.S., offers over 70 square miles of protected mangrove forests and coral reefs to be enjoyed by snorkeling, kayaking, or even from the comfort of a glass-bottom boat tour. The waters surrounding Key Largo are protected by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, which includes the Florida Reef, the third-largest barrier reef in the world. Key Largo is also a fantastic origin point for fishing excursions, parasailing, and Jet Skiing, too.

But despite all the opportunities for pumping your adrenaline, the island is a place of deep relaxation as well. Couples can relax from the privacy of their upscale hotel and enjoy the colorful splendor of a tropical sunset, while multigenerational groups can find activities for all. Film buffs can visit the Caribbean Club, which featured prominently in the Humphrey Bogart classic Key Largo, and helped the island gain fame in the late 1940s. A gentle stroll through the Laura Quinn Wild Bird Sanctuary brings you up close and personal with the region's dazzling endemic bird species, an incredible eco experience fit for all ages and abilities.

No matter what kind of itinerary you prefer, the island offers something for every type of traveler. Come for adventure, come for relaxation—come as you are. Key Largo is waiting.

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It starts with the treasure that is Everglades National Park, a bucket-list destination for curious travelers from around the world. Located less than an hour's drive from the upscale downtown Naples area (an epicurean adventure of its own), the Everglades transports visitors back to the unspoiled, natural beauty of Florida's marshland. An unparalleled landscape of exceptional scenery and rare wildlife, the Everglades is the only subtropical preserve in North America, encompassing 1.5 million acres of wilderness.

The beauty of the Everglades lies in its diversity—distinct habitats like sawgrass prairies, freshwater slough, and mangroves house a variety of astounding flora and fauna. Explore the hundreds of miles of water trails by kayak or canoe to get a closer look at the wildlife; everything from manatees to alligators to the occasional Florida panther. Delight in a bird-watching excursion or get out on open waters on a fishing trip in the brimming Florida Gulf Coast. For those adventurous types, a ranger-led slough slogging experience is in order—wade through the waist-deep waters of pristine Florida swampland for a journey you'll never forget.

At the edge of the Everglades, just off the coast, sits Ten Thousand Islands, a tranquil string of remote islands and mangroves that are well worth a visit. A variety of unique experiences await—spend an afternoon exploring the thriving music, arts, and culture on Marco Island; hunt for spectacular seashells on a guided shelling tour; or hop on a naturalist-led boat tour and watch as a school of friendly dolphins play in the wake.

Wind down from all the action with a perfectly serene beach day on Keewaydin Island. Located just off the coast of Naples, this border island is only accessible by boat. Eighty percent of the land is undeveloped, so expect eight miles of untouched, pet-friendly shoreline. Colorful food boats often barge near the island, serving simple beachside fare for an added element of charm.

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Vibrant St. Pete/ Clearwater

Sugar-white sands and warm Gulf breezes are just the beginning.

Situated between the Gulf of Mexico and Tampa Bay, the sunny St. Pete/Clearwater area truly has it all. Start your escape here by exploring the stunning stretches of coastline that have made the region famous, like lively Clearwater Beach or laid-back St. Pete Beach. Watery adventures abound, whether you opt to Jet Ski, kayak, paddleboard, fish, or take a dolphin-spotting boat trip. Visit Sand Key, which is located on a barrier island and known for its namesake park; seashells make it a draw for beachcombers. The beach at Sand Key is also a nesting site for endangered sea turtles, while a salt marsh here harbors herons and other birds. Or check out pristine Fort De Soto Park, the perfect place for an all-day excursion. You can picnic, sunbathe, explore the fort and the natural surroundings, and then watch the sun slowly set over the Gulf.

With more than thirty museums to check out, it's easy to get artsy in St. Pete. Art buffs arriving in St. Pete should first head to the whimsical Dalí Museum on the waterfront, which contains 2,400 works spanning the Spanish surrealist artist's career. The city also has a stellar collection of glass art, including the larger-than-life sculptures at the Chihuly Collection and works by contemporary glass artists at the Imagine Museum. The James Museum captures the art, culture, and wildlife of the American West. Showcasing pottery, fine arts, textiles, and furniture from Gustav Stickley, Frank Lloyd Wright, and other designers, the Museum of the American Arts & Crafts Movement is a new addition on the museum scene. And a visit to the immersive Fairgrounds St. Pete is a must—it features fun, interactive installations that merge technology and art.

Ruby Red Icicle Chandelier
at Chihuly Collection

The food scene in St. Pete/Clearwater is deliciously dynamic, with a mix of exciting newcomers and legendary restaurants. The highlight of nearly every menu? Locally sourced ingredients, including fresh Gulf seafood like shrimp and grouper. You'll find everything from a Nordic- and Asian-inspired eatery to a New York-style deli, a Korean restaurant, and a spot where barbeque meets all things tropical and tiki. And don't miss the traditional Greek cuisine to be found in Tarpon Springs. The new St. Pete Pier boasts 26 beautiful acres of outdoor dining, an open-air market, and more. Time-tested dining options in the area range from rustic-chic to romantic, with plenty of local, family-owned institutions in the mix. And thanks to the balmy temperatures here, you'll be able to eat outdoors year-round.

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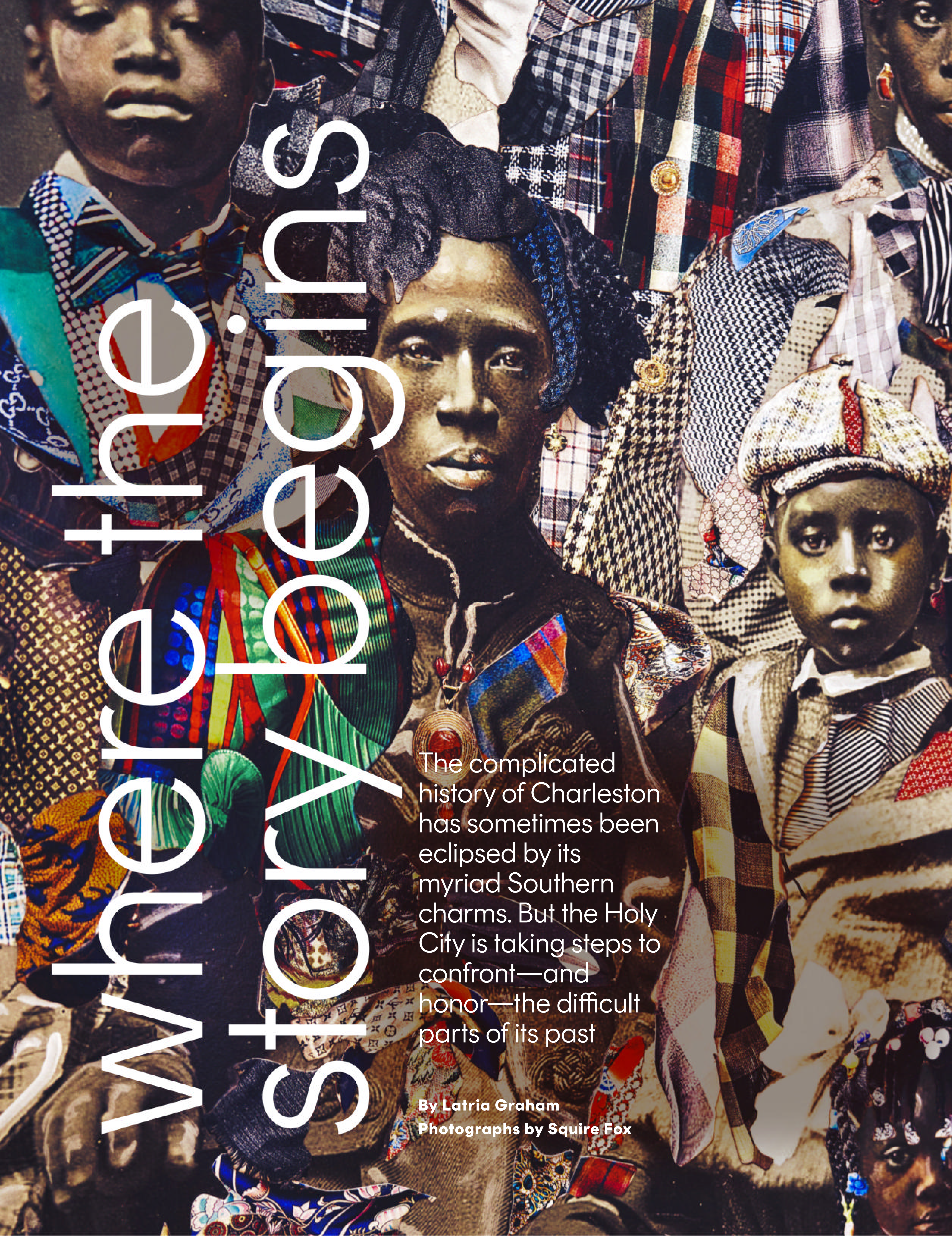


Where the story begins

The complicated history of Charleston has sometimes been eclipsed by its myriad Southern charms. But the Holy City is taking steps to confront—and honor—the difficult parts of its past

By Latria Graham
Photographs by Squire Fox

Rainbow Row, 13 brightly painted historic homes, lines East Bay Street near the Charleston Harbor

Opposite page: Artist Stan Squirewell's moving mixed-media collage, *Bakers*, hangs in the new International African American Museum

In Charleston, the land bears witness. But the water is where the story begins.

It was on the waves of the Atlantic, beginning in the 16th century, that hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans—packed tightly into the cargo holds of European slave ships—were transported from West Africa to the Americas. If they survived the treacherous crossing known as the Middle Passage, most would arrive at Sullivan's Island, a two-and-a-half-mile-long barrier island separating the city of Charleston from the Atlantic Ocean. After a period of quarantine, they would be transferred to mainland Charleston, to a dock known as Gadsden's Wharf, and sold to the highest bidder.

Before the American Revolution, this enslaved labor force built the South Carolina Low Country into a place of unfettered prosperity, with Charleston as its epicenter. The goods wrought through its plantation economy—indigo, rice, and later sea island cotton—made Charleston the wealthiest city in the 13 colonies. Isolated and forced to toil on these hot, humid coastal plantations, West Africans were able to retain pieces of their culture, passing down songs, stories, and foodways from their home across the ocean. After emancipation, some stayed on and created self-sustaining coastal communities. Their descendants became known as the Gullah Geechee. A swath of land along the coast, which stretches from Wilmington, North Carolina, down to Jacksonville, Florida, is now called the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.

Every year descendants of Sullivan's Island's earliest arrivals hold a ceremony to commemorate their ancestors, though today there's little to mark the significance of this place beyond a black metal bench perched on a marshy overlook. The structure is part of Toni Morrison's Bench by the Road Project, established to create memorials to, and sites of contemplation for, the horrors of this period. "It's never too late to honor the dead," Morrison said at the bench's dedication ceremony in 2008. "It's never too late to applaud the living who do them honor."

This dictum—to honor and to applaud—brought me to Charleston this past December. I'm a seventh-generation South Carolinian, reared in the counties of Newberry and Spartanburg. But although I'm a direct descendant of those who were brought here, I was never told about Sullivan's Island growing up. It's only now, at the age of 36, that I've finally come face-to-face with it.

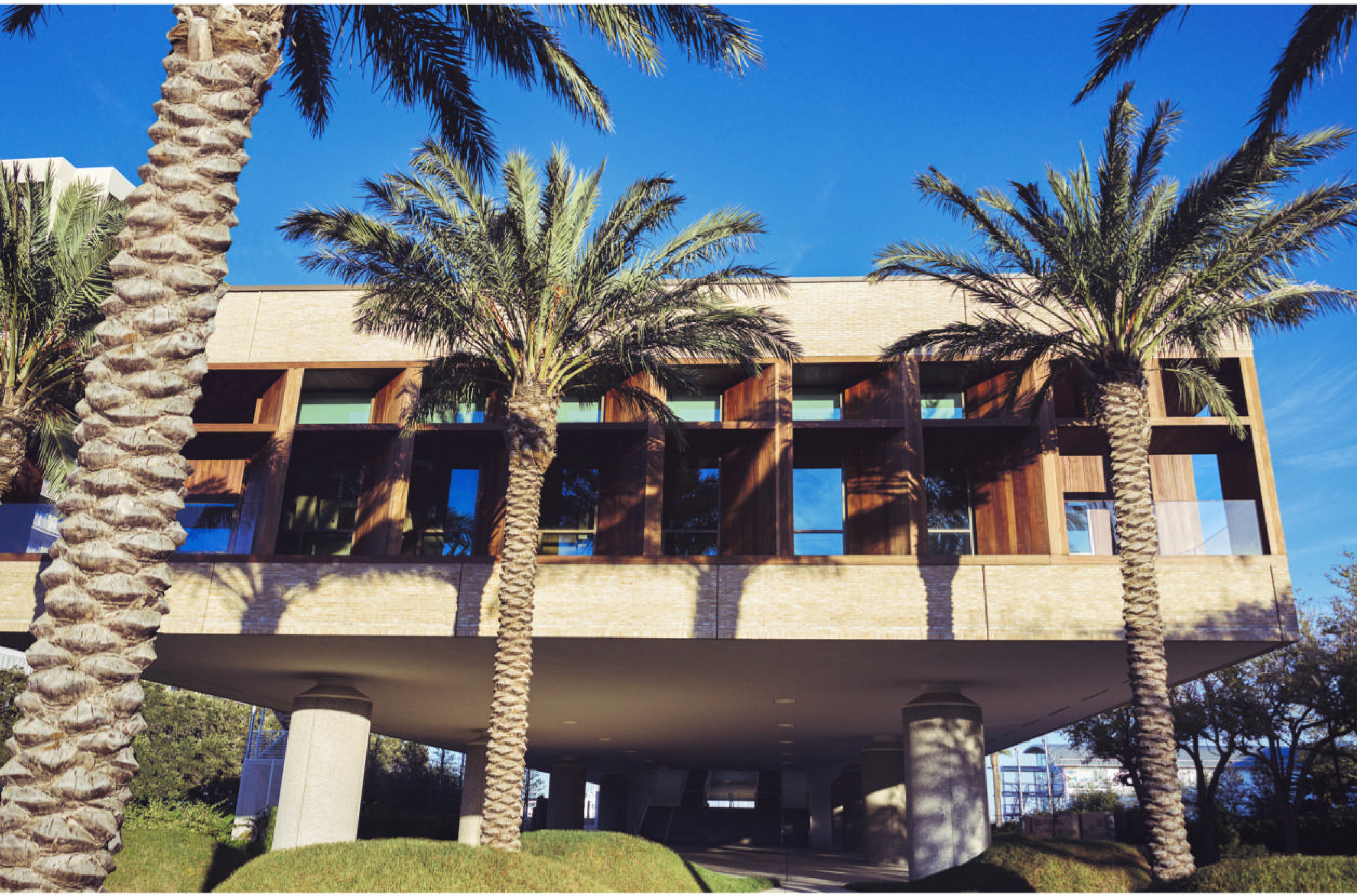
I was also drawn by curiosity. Charleston, or the version of it depicted on shows like Bravo's *Southern Hospitality,* has long been

the picture of charm: a wonderland of pastel townhomes and ancient live oaks, buoyed by an internationally recognized food scene and an ever-expanding roster of comfortable upscale hotels. Coupled with its verdant natural landscapes and thriving cultural scene, the city is a popular destination for travelers who want to experience the bucolic ease of the so-called Low Country lifestyle. Much of this nostalgic sensibility, of course, leaves out Charleston's origin story. But in recent years, the city has gone to great lengths to address this omission. It is this effort—to make visible that which has for so long been hidden—that brought me here, to the water's edge.

The long-awaited International African American Museum (IAAM), some 20 years in the making, is perhaps the most prominent way the city has sought to acknowledge the caesura in Charleston's story. The $125 million complex, which opens to the public on June 27, sits on the former site of Gadsden's Wharf, its pale oblong frame hovering on a series of pillars that appear to lift it off the sand. It looks like a beacon, calling back the descendants of the enslaved people who were sold there. People like me.

I wonder what this place must have looked like to the ships bobbing in the distance; what my ancestors thought about the land

From far left:
Dr. Tonya M. Matthews, president and CEO of the International African American Museum; the Pitmaster Combo (pit-cooked meats and classic sides) at Rodney Scott's BBQ; Tia Clark, founder of Casual Crabbing with Tia, demonstrates how to throw a cast net



coming into view. I follow the wood walkway leading to the museum entrance, noting the brick pavers that outline a large square: the site of a former slave storehouse, unearthed by builders during the wharf's excavation. The space isn't much bigger than the house I live in and yet repositories like this once held as many as 700 people at a time. A refrain from Maya Angelou's poem "Still I Rise," a paean to Black resilience, is etched into the granite around the outline: "Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave."

This pairing—the acknowledgment of brutality with the commemoration of persistence—is a strategy the museum deploys continuously. "It's important that the space communicates not just the death and destruction that happened here," Dr. Tonya M. Matthews, the president and CEO of the IAAM, tells me, "but the life and the resilience and the fight too. This is one of the greatest gifts the African American journey gives to our nation, if not the world: the ability to simultaneously hold the sensations of trauma and joy."

About midway through the museum's nine galleries, I enter a large room split in half by a wall of picture windows. The left side, titled Departure, is filled with the names and ages of West African children—Oobah, 16; Bonnaseah, 8; Seeahiah, 6; Marpoo, 4. The right side, Arrival, offers the anglicized versions of those names: Anna, Bess, Cicero, Daniel. There are no ages here, as if to demonstrate all that has been stripped away.

I find myself needing sunlight and return to the big windows overlooking the harbor. Below me, there is a tide pool near the museum entrance. At the ground level I'd noticed silvery aberrations beneath the surface of the water, which I'd taken for random artistic punctuations. But they are the outlines of bodies—more specifically, as I later learn, figures packed onto the slave ship *Brookes*. Matthews explains that the water will flow in and out over the forms with the coming and going of the tide.

"When the waters are lowering, I'm reminded of those we lost in that space," she tells me. "But when they rise, I think of those who rose up and out of it."

We have survived, I think. Our stories are safe here, protected behind glass plates, where bits of the past and present converse with one another: A woven winnowing basket from Burkina Faso sits in a different gallery near the basket made by the renowned

Gullah Geechee artist Corey Alston, who sells his work at Charleston City Market down the street. There are also presentations of the music, storytelling, and food produced in this city. One highlights the local chef Kardea Brown, the Food Network star whose show streams into my home every week; another, Darius Rucker, the lead vocalist for the South Carolina band Hootie and the Blowfish. Despite the very real threats of gentrification, inflation, and rising seas, Black people in Charleston are still innovating, not only paying homage to the traditions that allowed their ancestors to survive but also using their imaginations in ways their predecessors didn't have license to.

From far left: The exterior of the International African American Museum, decades in the making; visual artist Jonathan Green in his studio a few blocks from the museum

→ stay

Hotel Bennett
In the heart of the city, this King Street hotel feels to me like a European getaway with its Italianate exterior; inside, it is full-on opulence, with marble and limestone to heighten the palazzo effect. Stop in at Camelunilia's, the hotel's Champagne lounge. *From $499; hotelbennett.com*

The Charleston Place
This is my tried-and-true Charleston stay. It's only one block from Charleston City Market and within walking distance of numerous must-visit locations downtown. I love the comfortable, well-appointed rooms, attentive staff, and sweeping views of the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge. Ordering room-service breakfast (try the eggs Benedict, served on buttermilk biscuits) while watching the sunrise from bed is one of my favorite ways to start a day here. *From $325; charlestonplace.com*

The Dewberry
On each visit to this mod hotel, I find a new detail to admire, and the views from the rooftop cocktail bar are stunning. Take advantage of its spa services—I always book a signature massage to unwind after a long day of strolling the city's cobblestone streets. *From $399; thedewberrycharleston.com*

→ eat

Gillie's Seafood
With its traditional meat-and-three plates and Low Country staples like seafood purloo, a regional take on rice pilaf, this spot never fails to satisfy. I also love its modern spins on comfort food. Try the soul rolls, deep-fried egg rolls filled with collard greens and pulled pork. *gilliesseafood.com*

Hannibal's Soul Kitchen
The crab rice at this downtown haunt is top-tier, and from time to time I'll order one of the menu's hard-to-find seasonal specials, like shark steak (just trust me). *hannibalkitchen.com*

39 Rue de Jean
Marcus Shell, one of the city's lauded Black executive chefs, helms this downtown brasserie. Expect imaginative riffs on French classics like scallops Provençal and coq au vin. *holycityhospitality.com*

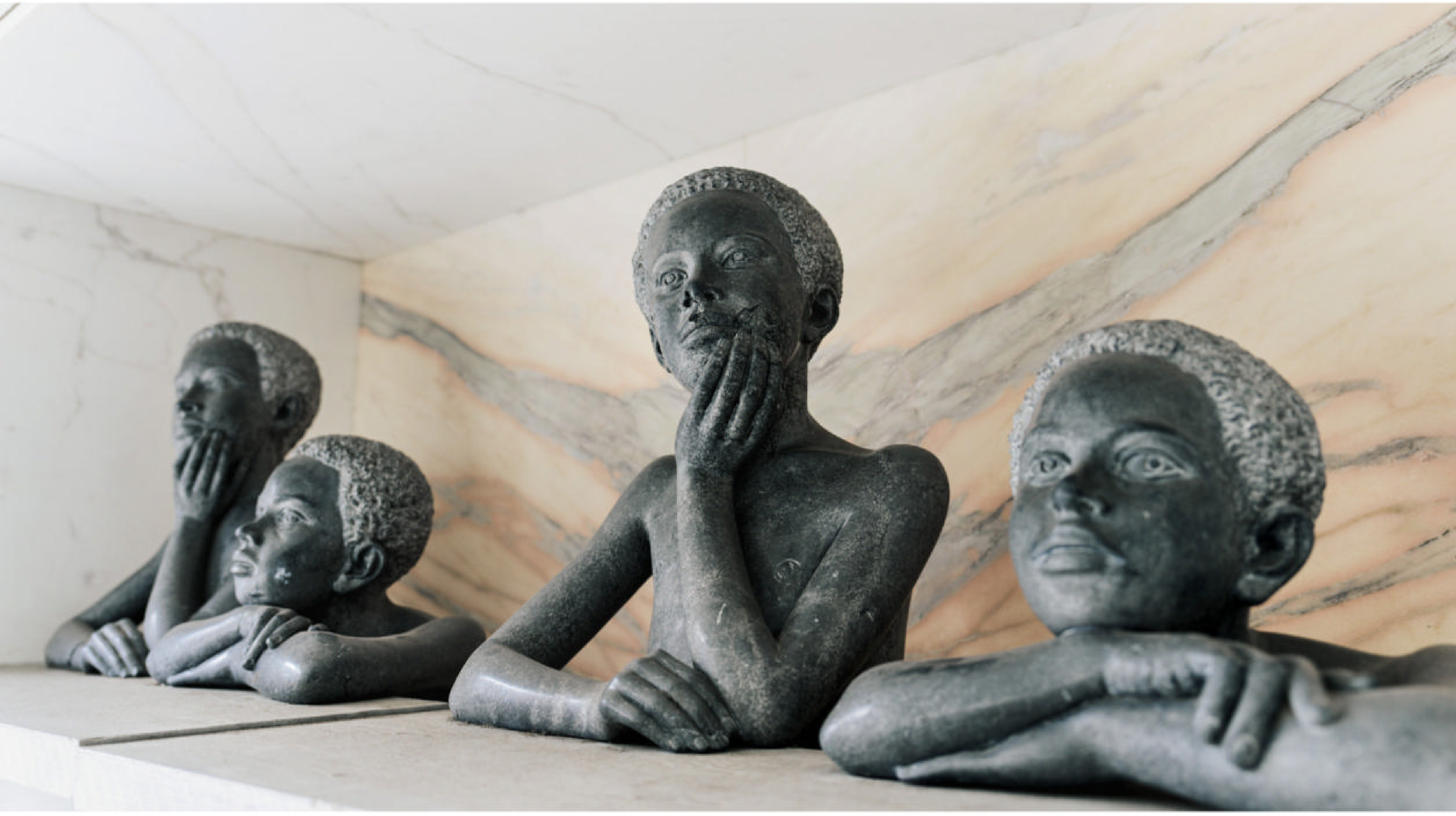
Daddy's Girls Bakery
From sweet-potato cheesecake to Charleston Chewies, a brown sugar blondie studded with pecans, you can't go wrong at this family-owned North Charleston bakery. *daddysgirlsbakery.com*

Rodney Scott's BBQ
The whole-hog barbecue that legendary pitmaster Rodney Scott serves is smoky, tender, and downright tasty. Between the throwback R&B jams and the disco ball in the center of the seating area, the place feels like an old-school get-together. *rodneyscottsbbq.com*

From left: Chef Erica Griffin of Hannibal's Soul Kitchen with a plate of her signature shrimp and crab rice; a sculpture of boys referred to as Mother Emanuel's Cherubs at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church

"Charleston is a maritime city," the visual artist Jonathan Green tells me later that day. We're standing in his airy, light-filled studio a few blocks inland from the museum. "It's on the ocean, and therefore it has an international presence. It always has." Two works in progress recline on easels, opposite each other. On the first canvas, two women in straw hats navigate a bateau, or small boat, down a creek; on the second, a woman gazes out over the water, the reeds licking at the hem of her dress.

Water, and the knowledge of it, is elemental to Green's work, which often depicts scenes of Gullah life. Most artists use gray tones to underpaint their subjects, a technique known as the grisaille method, but Green uses a watery indigo instead. For the



Gullah Geechee people, the color blue—haint blue, specifically—is also meant to keep evil spirits away. "I need all the protection I can get," Green says with a chuckle. He then paints vibrant shades onto the outlines, allowing them to capture the fullness of his heritage: the reverence and belonging as well as the joy.

The next morning I continue my journey around the peninsula, to a dock in Brittlebank Park that is nestled into a curve in the Ashley River. The water and the sky are the same color, separated only by the grass that grows at the water's edge. I've come, along with nearly a dozen others, for Casual Crabbing with Tia, a two-and-a-half-hour experience during which we'll learn how to fish and catch crabs, the way people in this region have for eons.

Tia Clark arrives wearing a snug beanie and a turquoise shirt tucked into her fishing bib. Now 43, Clark began crabbing only five and a half years ago. Like many on the peninsula, she spent decades working in the hospitality industry, until a sudden illness forced a lifestyle change. A cousin took her crabbing as a way to add physical exercise to her daily routine—a gesture that also allowed her to reclaim a piece of her family's story. She began taking people out on the water and detailing her exploits on Facebook and Instagram. Soon a full-time business was born.

Clark regales us with facts about *Callinectes sapidus,* the ancient Greek name for the Atlantic blue crab. "It means 'beautiful, savory swimmer,'" she explains before demonstrating the proper way to hold one. The sun rises higher in the sky, and we shed our jackets as the day warms. I learn that there is an art to throwing a cast net. It must fan out just so in order for the weights to land on the bottom of the river and trap unsuspecting prey. But time after time mine lands with a splat, and at first I come up with nothing more than half an oyster shell.

As I heave my chest forward and fling the net over the railing, I imagine my ancestors watching each attempt, and by the time our session is over, I've managed to catch a couple of the crustaceans. I smile wide for the camera, holding one of them exactly the way Clark taught me, and silently resolve to bring my mother and brother back here—to show them what it took for our folks to survive.

I feel the soreness in my upper arms as I get in my car and head south, to the place where the Ashley River meets Wappoo Creek, a section of Charleston called James Island. There, on a stretch of the riverbank, sits the McLeod Plantation Historic Site—the 37-acre remains of what was once a 1,700-acre plot and a major producer of sea island cotton.

I find my guide, Toby Smith, at the water's edge. A Charleston native herself, Smith is only three generations removed from slavery; her great-great-grandmother Idella was taken from Ghana at the age of eight and sold, likely at the city's slave market. Since 2020, Smith, a historian, has served as an interpretive guide and is currently the cultural history interpretation coordinator; she spends her days combing its archives and looking for clues about

the lived experiences of the men, women, and children held there, citing her desire to highlight their humanity and individuality. This approach has increasingly been emulated at sites like Middleton Place, some 15 miles northwest of Charleston, which offers guided walks through the spectacular gardens that were once tended by enslaved hands, and Aiken-Rhett House, which reveals urban life in antebellum Charleston with tours offered through the lens of the enslaved people who maintained it.

Smith tells me the story of Leia Brown, who was a little girl when she was purchased by the McLeod family in the 1850s, and the generations she spawned. “She would live long enough to become a grandmother, and that granddaughter would live long enough to see Barack Obama elected and reelected,” Smith tells me. In September 2022, McLeod held a ceremony to honor Leia’s memory. More than 70 of her descendants attended, scattering roses into the creek that brought their matriarch to this place. “Seeing that was something that I’ll never forget,” says Smith.

Smith’s role represents a pointed departure from the moonlight-and-magnolias mystique that has long flavored tours of the region’s historic sites, which have traditionally lavished attention on the architecture of grand plantation houses and the social milieu of the wealthy families that occupied them. Most upkeep efforts were directed toward these spaces, while the slave quarters—relegated to the margins and accessed via specialized viewings that always cost “extra”—were erased from the landscape. On traditional tours, guides tend to speak highly of merchant families with “shipping interests” rather than slave traders. This kind of deceptive language is one reason many of the country’s deepest wounds are allowed to fester—until catastrophe strikes.

Each time hate erupts, Charleston must choose the type of city it aspires to be. In June 2015, a white supremacist opened fire on Black worshippers at Emanuel AME Church, one of the oldest African Methodist Episcopal churches in the southern United States, killing nine members. Just four days later, the church opened its doors to give the community a place to grieve. The planned Emanuel Nine Memorial will be the city’s next step in grappling with its past.

The citizens of Charleston—and the country writ large—were once again prompted to reckon with the past in 2020, following the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, when crowds took to

→ do

The Tiny Tassel Charleston
This brightly hued jewelry and accessories shop stocks products made by local artists, including art prints, stationery, and size-inclusive clothing designed by founder Mimi Striplin and her mother, Keiko.

Charleston Farmers Market
From April to December at this Saturday-morning market, you'll find fresh produce from nearby islands, stalls selling prepared regional food, and performances by local musicians. I usually pick up ravioli from pasta maker Rio Bertolini, confections from Bert and T's Desserts, and greens and tomatoes from Johns Island–based Joseph Fields Farm.

Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture
The Avery's archives are filled with photographs, artifacts, and memorabilia—the items that interest folks who want to explore the nuances of Black life in the Low Country. Its reading room has resources that can assist researchers doing genealogical work.

A great tour guide can change the way you see a city—and how you understand its history. Franklin Williams of **Frankly Charleston,** a walking tour, and Al Miller of **Sites and Insights Tours Inc.,** a bus-tour operator, visit often-overlooked sites relevant to Black history and they don't shy away from talking about gentrification and its effects on generations of Black Charlestonians.

the streets demanding justice. Soon after, a statue of the politician John C. Calhoun, a staunch supporter of slavery, was dethroned from its pedestal on Marion Square. More than a century and a half after the Emancipation Proclamation, Charleston is still figuring out how to talk about Black history. But the efforts now underway, everywhere from its plantations to its newest museum, are slowly moving the conversation forward.

On my way out of town, I stop by Charleston Harbor, just a few blocks from the IAAM, and stare out across the horizon. My gaze goes past Castle Pinckney, over Sullivan's Island, and then, finally, out to the Atlantic Ocean. Slowly, I dip my fingers into the water, knowing that it leads to another continent thousands of miles away—and to more clues about how my ancestors got here.

From far left: Built in 1891, Emanuel AME Church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; a parishioner of Emanuel AME Church, which has the one of the oldest Black congregations in the South; looking out at the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge, which spans the Cooper River

counting sheep

Again and again, Tim Ecott returns to the Faroe Islands, drawn to the rugged vistas and the sturdy creatures that inhabit them

Photograph by Chris Poplawski

Pastureland near the village of Saksun, on the island of Streymoy, in the Faroe Islands

The rolling Atlantic continuously reflects an enchanting light, while the shadowed mountains loom like spirits, echoing with the strident cries of seabirds. Constant rains feed sparkling rivulets that make the dark basalt bedrock glisten and the sheer green slopes shine. My friend Teitur runs ahead of me, whistling at his sheepdog, Nova, as she herds a pair of ewes. Teitur is an *innløgumaður*—a man who gets what he can from the land. Unrestrained by the steep, uneven ground, he is never far behind his dog. I follow at a slower pace, aware that a single misstep could be disastrous. Men have often perished in these mountains; everyone who lives in the Faroes knows someone who has died. Another friend once cautioned, as we followed sheep along a cliff path, “Don’t worry, you only fall once.”

Living here has never been easy, as the Vikings and Irish monks who first settled this archipelago between Iceland and Norway discovered over a millennium ago. The Vikings brought the rugged, shaggy sheep, a ubiquitous feature of the landscape and a key to understanding these islands. After more than a decade of visits, I have come to love these animals. I have spent some of my happiest days, in what is for me a fundamentally happy place, helping herd hundreds of them through empty valleys in a driving rain.

Hefted to the land, precisely numbered and individually accounted for, these multicolored, semiwild creatures receive no pampering and have to fend for themselves in the mountains, which regularly receive the highest wind speeds in Europe and where rain is predicted 300 days a year. Even in summer, the high ground temperature rarely goes above 55 degrees Fahrenheit, and growing anything other than grass and tenacious root vegetables is nigh impossible; but the lamb and mutton here can lay claim to being the tastiest in the world.

The relationships I have forged with sheep farmers are a privilege born from my many trips to the Faroes. In this most elemental and sometimes ferocious landscape, there is still a palpable rawness to life, even as people’s daily routines have become increasingly urban. In the more rural villages, I have watched in awe as friends, using only a sharp knife, transformed a living animal into a carcass ready for hanging and curing in less than 20 minutes. I have learned how to slaughter sheep myself. I have also become skilled at peeling off the animal’s fleece with my knuckles and helping sort the blood and offal for black pudding and sausages. The rich intestinal fat, garnatálg, is molded into great cheese-shaped discs that will garnish Christmas plates of fermented fish. I am inexpert at these skills, but luckily for me, one of the chief attributes of my Faroese friends is patience.

In this most elemental and sometimes ferocious landscape, there is still a palpable rawness to life

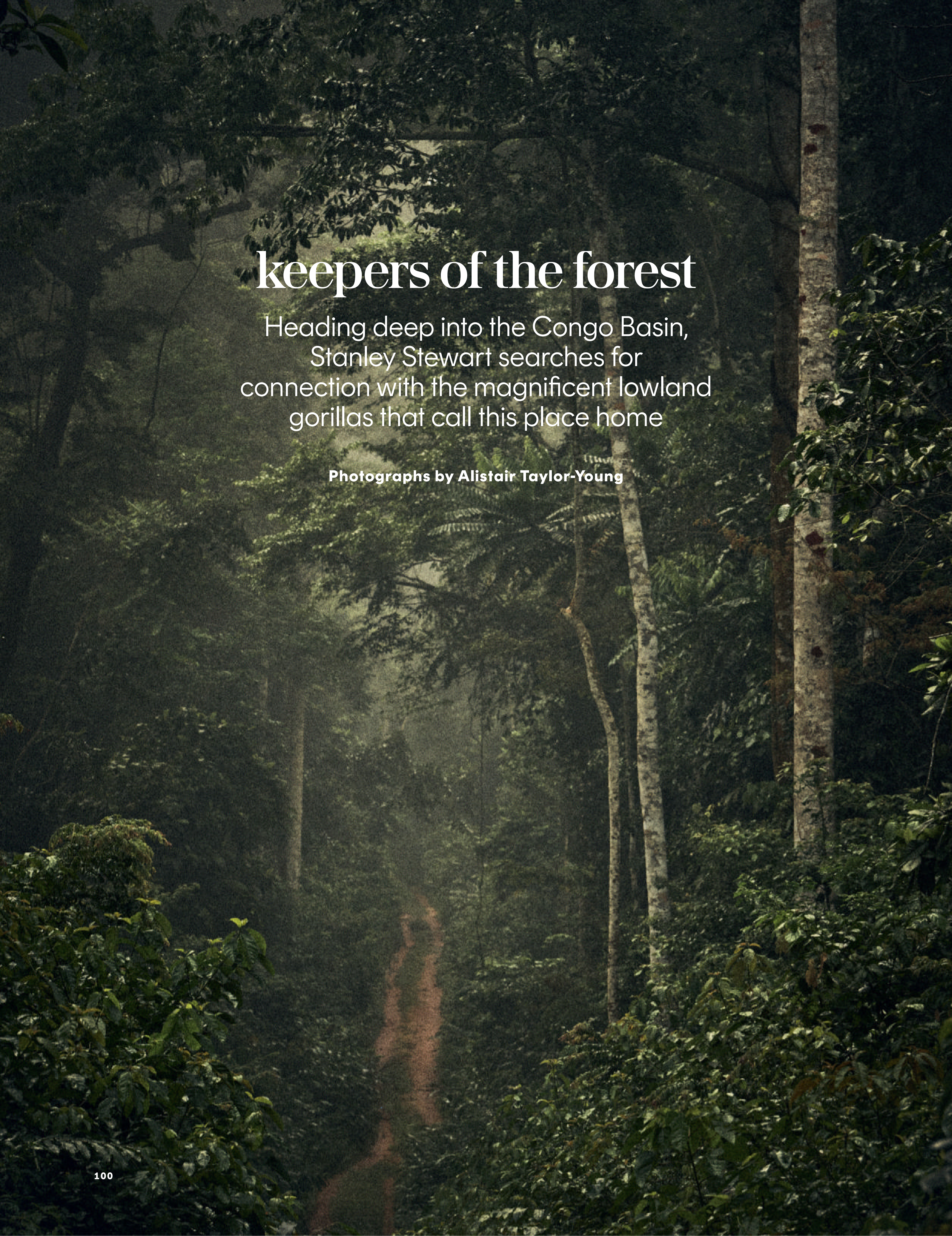
The Faroese name for these islands, *Føroyar,* comes from the Old Norse for sheep, *fǽr,* and the plural *oyar,* for islands. Sheep stand in roadside paddocks in the capital and along precipices, where they teeter, scrabble, and climb the dissolving scree of vertiginous cliffs. Sometimes you even meet them in the car park at the airport. Their bleating cry is as much the music of these green mountains as the shrill call of the oystercatchers, the Faroes’ noisy national bird.

In 1298, the bishop of Faroe Islands drew up a legal document known as *The Sheep Letter (Seyðabrævið),* primarily to address questions of animal husbandry—though it also came to function as a de facto constitution. Bound in thick leather, with ancient wafer-thin pages covered in spidery ink, the original is as weathered and brown as cured tobacco leaves after years of being handled, stuffed in a traveling bag by the island lawmaker, and carried from island to island by rowboat. I once examined a local copy in the National Archives, and although a digitized version exists online, there is nothing like the sight and scent of a book as old and symbolic as this. This version has doodles in the margins, including a tiny drawing of a sheep and a shepherd with his crook.

The autumn slaughter is my favorite time. It’s a communal event during which farmers meet to chase the wiry, colorfully fleeced animals down from the mountainsides. Back at the farm, there are convivial meals of bread and potatoes served alongside cold legs of fermented lamb from last year’s gathering. Diners pass around sturdy shanks, each held aloft by the shinbone, using a sharp knife to slice off bits of the dark meat, which is patterned with mold and smells of blue cheese. The meat is not salted or frozen but simply hung in a well-ventilated wood shed for several months. Then, hundreds of strains of bacteria work their magic, fermenting and curing the meat to produce the unique delicacy called skerpikjøt.

The mountains here strongly resemble the Mountains of Mourne in Northern Ireland, where I grew up. There I saw ravens playing in the wind, and my horizon was either out to sea or inland to the high ground, where the strong, cold smell of the waves swept upward and across the rambling green slopes of Slieve Donard, Commedagh, and Bearnagh. I adore the familiar emptiness of the Faroes’ highlands, but I’ve come to value their inhabitants more. I relish their company, their practical skills, and their willingness to talk. Their lack of inhibition in conversation and ability to recognize simple, important truths also reminds me of Ireland. Everyone knows where their grandparents and great-grandparents came from, and to whom they are related in this tight-knit community of a little more than 50,000 people. Like the sheep, my Faroese friends know where they belong. It makes them sure-footed.

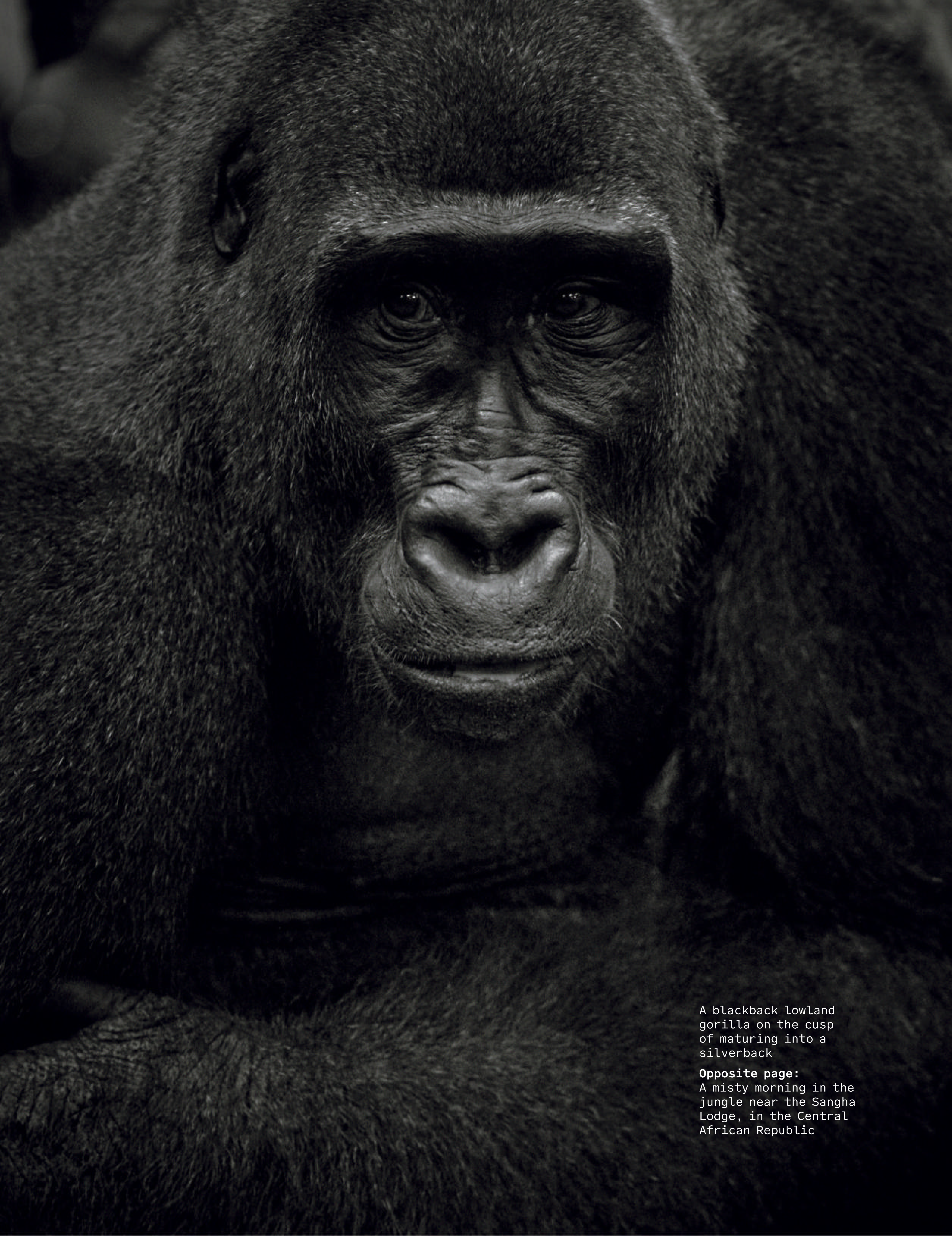
TIM ECOTT IS THE AUTHOR OF *THE LAND OF MAYBE: A FAROE ISLANDS YEAR* (SHORT BOOKS).



keepers of the forest

Heading deep into the Congo Basin, Stanley Stewart searches for connection with the magnificent lowland gorillas that call this place home

Photographs by Alistair Taylor-Young



A blackback lowland gorilla on the cusp of maturing into a silverback

Opposite page: A misty morning in the jungle near the Sangha Lodge, in the Central African Republic

In the half-light of the equatorial jungle of the Congo Basin, we whispered to one another, our voices sounding thin and reedy in this colossal place. The tracker silenced us and motioned for us to stop. We stood in the narrow trail, as still as statues, listening, holding our breath. I could feel my heart pumping.

It was 6 a.m., and in the predawn we were tracking a family of lowland gorillas, tiptoeing in single file into the green depths of one of the world's greatest rain forests. Gabin Okele, the tracker, had already warned us against sudden movements, to keep our voices low and avoid eye contact, as if we were outsiders walking into some locals-only bar.

Ahead of us now, Okele crouched and peered through the forest understory. Turning, he mouthed a single word: "Close." For a moment all was still. And then, as if in a dream, a huge gorilla barely 30 feet away shouldered his way through the bushes, a dark figure with a flash of silver across his back. A second later he was gone, disappearing into the thickets of foliage. That sighting was so strange and eerie that for a little while, I wondered if I had imagined it.

But I hadn't. We followed the silverback, then spent the next hour watching him and his family of eight at breakfast. I had hoped for more action: squabbles, chest thumping, mating rituals. But this gorilla breakfast was as refined as a tea party. Thick-necked, broad-shouldered, with arms like tree trunks, the great apes sat on their haunches, delicately plucking tiny leaves here and there, thoughtfully chewing them in their massive jaws. It was as if we had stumbled on sumo wrestlers bent over floral needlework. Stranger still was the way the gorillas ignored us. They were aloof and detached. I had hoped for a flicker of recognition, a connection. Were they not intrigued by the resemblance, our gestures, mannerisms, and faces so like their own?

The Congo Basin, the green, river-laced center of the continent, sprawls across six African countries. It is the world's second-largest rain forest, after Amazonia: 1.2 million square miles, the size of Western Europe, soaking up more than a billion tons of carbon dioxide each year. And like the Amazon, it faces existential threats from industrial logging and agriculture, mining, and urbanization. Without these forests, the gorillas aren't the only ones who would be doomed—so would the rest of our planet. As well as acting as the earth's lungs, they are famous

Clockwise from above: In the village of Mbombo in the Republic of the Congo, a local girl flashes a broad smile; an adolescent gorilla near the banks of the Sangha River, in the Central African Republic; a *Cymothoe hyarbita* butterfly, found throughout central Africa, on a window screen at Sangha Lodge

for their biodiversity, containing more than 600 types of trees and 10,000 species of animals, including forest elephants, chimpanzees, okapis, leopards, lions, and the elusive lowland gorillas we had come to see.

At every turn in this lush, outlandish world, a visitor encounters things that are barely believable. There are head-banging termites that make a collective noise like a rattlesnake to deter invaders, and suicide-bomber termites that explode when ants breach their tunnels, coating trespassers with a viscous substance. There are ants that sew leaves together to make pretty nests. There are assassin bugs that disguise themselves with their victims' bodies. There is a fungus—*Cordyceps*—whose spores invade the bodies of insects, turning them into zombies to serve its needs (the inspiration for HBO's *The Last of Us*). All of which might make the gorillas seem ordinary, were it not for those faces, those gestures, those hands with their delicate fingernails, those expressions, those pursed lips, those thoughtful eyes. That there should be a creature so like ourselves in these remote jungles is the Congo's greatest marvel.

I'd come to Odzala-Kokoua National Park, a vast tract of more than 5,200 square miles in the northern provinces of the Republic of the Congo. Though one of central Africa's oldest parks, protected since 1935, it remains one of its least known. Tourism is still in its infancy there, and Odzala's remote landscapes of savanna and tropical forest see only a trickle of lucky visitors. It is managed by African Parks, a nonprofit conservation organization that was established in 2000 and pioneered a business model that focuses on the long-term sustainability of both the parkland and the surrounding communities. In addition to Odzala, 21 of Africa's most vulnerable and least commercially viable parks are under its wing.

The park has three upmarket lodges, courtesy of the Congo Conservation Company. It takes some time to get to them, but that is part of the pleasure. I flew in a small bush plane north from Brazzaville, over vast tracts of forest threaded by serpentine rivers, and landed on a grass airstrip, where there was nothing but a cluster of tin sheds. After driving in a 4x4 on mud tracks for a couple of hours, passing only a handful of people on foot carrying firewood or sacks of flour or buckets of water on their heads, I finally arrived at Ngaga Camp. It is an oasis of luxuries deep in the rain forest: stylish thatched cabanas on stilts, lighted walkways, a succession of wonderful meals, a wide platform lounge of sofas and cushions, books and binoculars, open on three sides to Africa, to vast trees and birdsong and extravagantly large butterflies.

Tourism is a tool here. These lodges and their paying guests provide income for the protection and conservation of Odzala: for park rangers and local education; for the mobile health unit that serves more than 3,000 villagers; for employment opportunities for people who have so few. Ngaga Camp and its facilities are also a support for an ongoing research project into lowland gorillas, overseen by Dr. Magda Bermejo and German Illera. Their work makes it possible for visitors like me to track the animals and observe their peaceful breakfast.

We reached Lango Camp, another of Congo Conservation Company's three lodges, on foot. It lies in a water world. Plodding through meandering channels, I felt like I was entering some innocent, newborn place only just emerging from the waters of the Flood. Here, giant kingfishers with long curved beaks darted ahead of us from tree to tree, like guides. Buffalo stood on the grassy banks, watching us with quizzical expressions as oxpeckers strutted across their backs looking for ticks. Round a bend, two blossom-filled trees full of colobus monkeys came into view. With their long black-and-white manes catching the light as they fled through the canopy, the monkeys looked like caped wizards, shrieking their disapproval.

Rich in wildlife, these swampy clearings are known as bais. All through the forests, ancient, labyrinthine elephant pathways converge on these clearings. The bais are the saloons, the dance halls, the swingers clubs, the coffee shops of the forest elephant world. As the day faded away, the shallows were patterned with the reflections of clouds and the quivering images of upside-down trees. African gray parrots rose from their cover and flew in swirling murmurations against skies that were thickening to a palette of pinks and purples. Chimps whooped in the distance on the edge of the forest. Away to the left, elephants flung mud on their backs.

At Lango Camp, we stepped out of the primeval waters onto a deck where sundowners awaited us. A long dining table shone with polished glass and stylish place settings. Appetizers arrived. At dinner—roast duck with a wonderful South African Chardonnay—we watched the elephants lumbering away through the twilight, returning to their forests, the baby trotting in its mother's wake. Later that night, tucked up in a sumptuous bed beneath mosquito nets, I could hear them trumpeting in the darkness, so close that it seemed as if they were in the next room.

Children from the Ba'aka tribe playing in the Dzanga-Sangha Special Reserve, a protected park in southwestern Central African Republic

A bush plane ferried us to another grass airstrip several hundred miles farther north. There we took a boat up the Sangha River, one of the great tributaries of the mighty Congo, five hours into the Central African Republic. Impenetrable forests crowded the banks, where giant trees trailed skirts of lianas and vines. Herons stalked the shallows on impossibly spindly legs, the Jurassic silhouettes of hornbills sailed through the canopy, and swallows acrobatically swept the surface of the water for insects. Other than ourselves, the only river traffic consisted of men silently poling pirogues between the banks of this wide, watery expanse. Stretching before us, the water was marbled with reflections. I had the sense of a strange momentum, as if the river were drawing us inexorably deeper into the rain forest.

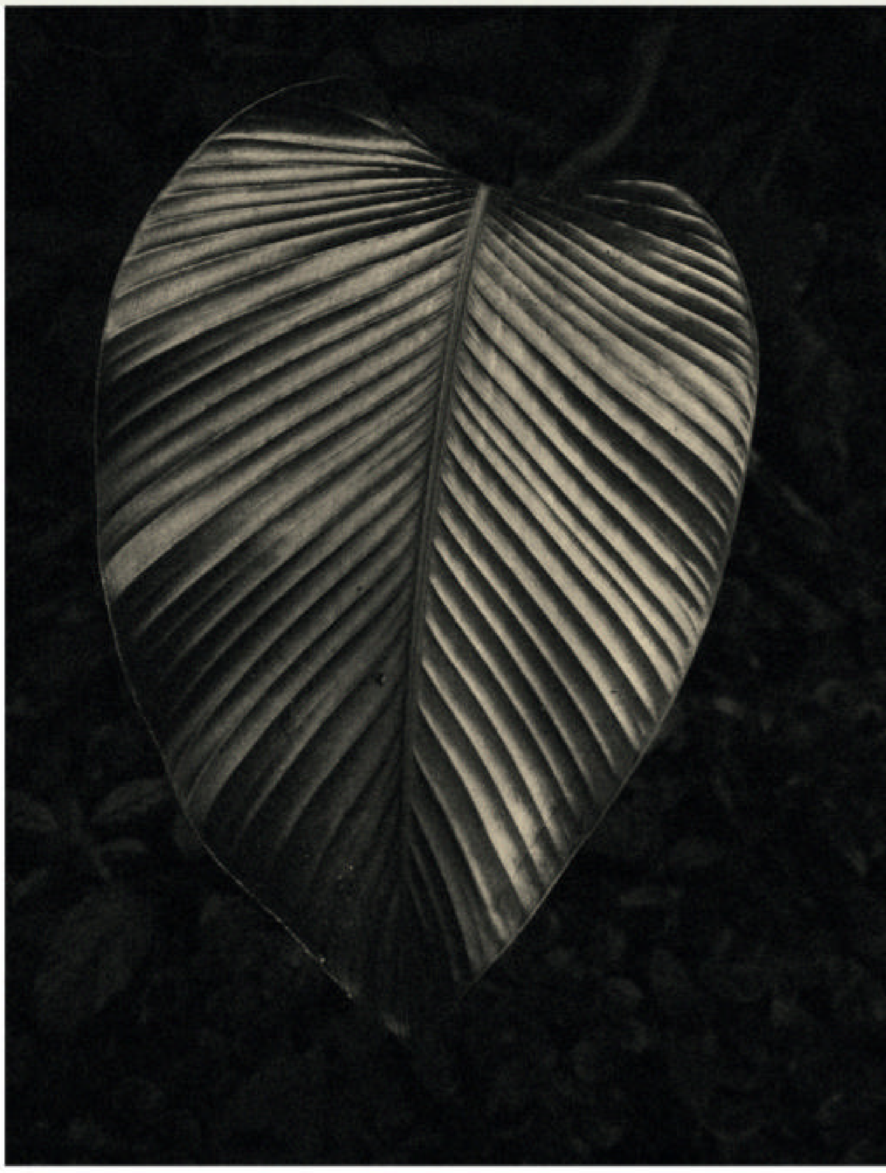
There were moments when I felt as if we were being watched. The air rang with an eerie cacophony of calls and shrieks, croaks and hoots, whistles and songs. I imagined the gorillas somewhere among the trees, squatting, resting their elbows on their knees, cradling their chins in their hands, glancing out at the river.

Lowland gorillas tend to be overshadowed by their celebrity cousins, the mountain gorillas, the stars of *Gorillas in the Mist* and the documentaries of David Attenborough. Living more than 1,000 miles to the east, where the troubled borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda converge, mountain gorillas attract a steady stream of visitors. Lowland gorillas of the Congo Basin have kept a lower profile. Few people visit.

Gorillas are one of four genera in the tiny, elite family of primates known as hominids, or great apes. The others are the orangutans of Sumatra and Borneo, the chimpanzees and bonobos of Africa, and us—human beings. Our genetic closeness to the three other members of this primate family is startling: We share 98 percent of our DNA with gorillas. Our common ancestor, from which both humans and gorillas evolved, slept in these forests several million years ago, when this swollen river and pristine landscape would have looked nearly as they do today.

Landfall, five hours upriver, was Sangha Lodge, run by Rod and Tamar Cassidy. A Gandalfian figure with a long white beard, Rod is a legend in the forest villages. He has remained in this remote outpost through the good times and the bad, fending off rebel soldiers and pandemics, and is happy to see visitors returning to one of Africa's most atmospheric lodges. Sangha may not offer the same level of luxury as the Odzala properties, but it is comfortable and charming, and its terrace is the

Clockwise from above: Crossing the Sangha, a tributary of the Congo River, between Cameroon and Central African Republic; a Ba'aka boy shows off his skills; a leaf from a *Haumania liebrechtsiana*, a plant used in traditional medicine by the Ba'aka and a common snack for gorillas and chimps



most meditative place on earth to watch the changing moods of a river, from the gossamer mists of dawn to the wash of evening color. We spent a day at Dzanga Bai watching the interaction of almost a hundred elephants: juveniles mock charging, old bulls mating, mothers rescuing little ones from deep puddles. And then, the next day, we went to look for the gorillas.

Ngala, a Ba'aka tracker, took charge. We needed to stay behind him at all times. We needed to back away slowly if the gorillas approached us. We needed to act like subordinates, which was easy because in this place we were.

We entered the forests on trails made by the great apes. Padding silently through the trees, the trackers made clicking noises to locate one another within the dense foliage and reassure the gorillas about our approach. After a half hour's trek, we suddenly came upon the group. In a dappled glen, the young were playing like gymnasts. They chased one another, skittering up and down tree trunks. They swung from vines. They wrestled, rolling about in a tangle of limbs, with a combination of affection and competition, invariably ending in long, forgiving embraces. All the while the mothers picnicked on tasty leaves.

Deeper in the forest, we came upon the silverback Makumba sitting with his back against a tree, munching fruit. He was alone except for a toddler, a year or two old, seated at his feet. In his early 40s, Makumba is old for a gorilla and no longer attracts new females to his family. In the aqueous light of the forest, there was a strange complicity between the toddler and the wise silverback, the bookends of gorilla life, as they shared fruit. Attentive and solicitous to his accomplice, Makumba didn't acknowledge our presence.

Then something unusual happened. The young gorilla noticed us. I could see his face creasing with curiosity. He got up and began to walk toward us on his back legs, unsteady as any toddler. Makumba gave a low growl. But the little gorilla ignored the warning. He was fixated on us, staring and searching our faces for clues. He waddled right up to me, so close that I could have stooped and shaken his hand. He peered into my face, gazing into my eyes with his perplexed, curious expression. This was the thrilling moment of connection I had been looking for. Was he thinking what I was thinking: Who is this creature, so familiar and yet so strange?

Then the young gorilla returned to his aging father. The old silverback had stood up, and the two of them turned away, ambling off into the depths of the Congo Basin, their figures diminishing until they disappeared at last into the forest.

HOW TO GET THERE

The writer's bespoke trip was organized by Explore Inc., a renowned African wilderness travel specialist that has worked in the Congo Basin for more than 20 years. He was a guest of Congo Conservation Company, whose work protects the forests of the Congo Basin. *exploreinc.com*; *congoconservation.travel*

wild is the wind

Quiet Menorca has long captivated artists, enchanting them with its dramatic skies and seducing them with its picturesque villages. Today, the island is still up to its old tricks, but it's found a new audience

By Stephanie Rafanelli   Photographs by Andrew Urwin

Cala Mitjana, on Menorca's southern coast, fills up fast early in the day

Opposite page: Cova d'en Xoroi, one of the many chic cliffside restaurants here

I wake to Mahón's rooftops,

crowned each morning by the first Spanish light. Dawn in this island village is a dissipating memory—a Rorschach test of clouds, backlit by the fiery rising sun that pours through the Moorish windows of my bedroom. I am only 43 nautical miles east of Mallorca, yet on this flat raft of land I feel entirely adrift from the world.

It's easy to be deceived by Menorca, a quaint pastoral island of rinsed blues and Celtic greens that was declared a biosphere reserve by UNESCO in 1993. Its pastures are filled with cattle and wheat and punctuated with whitewashed windmills. The Romans christened it Insula Minor, Lesser Island, as if forever bequeathing it plain-Jane status next to Ibiza and Mallorca, its alluring Balearic sisters. And yet the world has always landed on its shores. Over the course of a millennium, it passed from the Arabs to the Aragonese to the Brits, who left behind their gin habit and contributed a smattering of words to Menorquí, the Catalan dialect of *sa*'s and *es*'s spoken, in whistling gusts, only on this island. For years it has attracted primarily British holidaygoers seeking its sharp and reliable sun, shallow blue waters, and earlier nights.

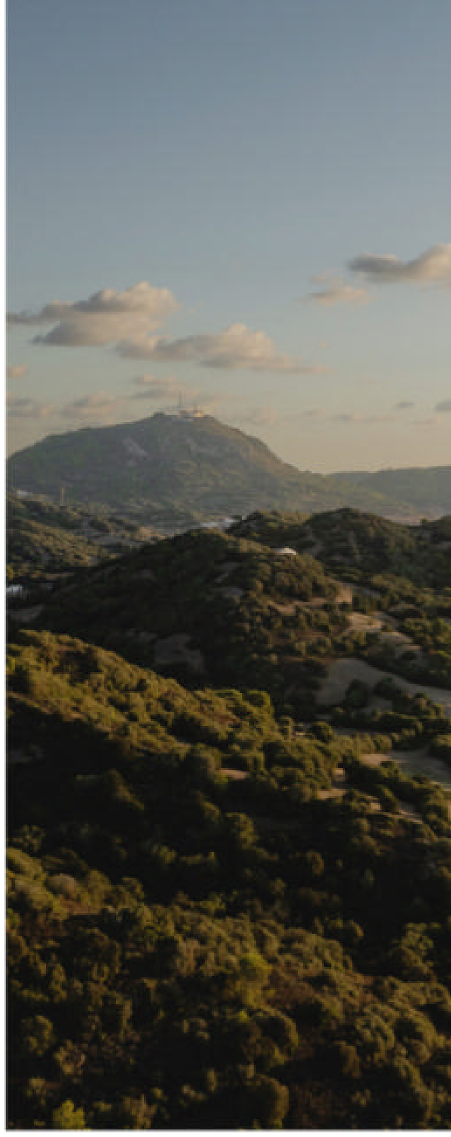
But elemental forces lurk here too. Last night, a storm unleashed its raw power on the tiny, tranquil island. Storms here are wild shows of energy, fueled by the infamous and annihilating north wind that can bring with it fleets of cumulus clouds that race like schooners across a purple-streaked sky. Its name—*tramuntana*—is also applied to unhinged artistic genius (though he never worked on Menorca, the Catalan surrealist Salvador Dalí was said to have been afflicted by it). The German artist Hans Hartung came here in 1932 to flee the Cubist-vilifying Nazis. He hid out among the booted eagles and red kites on the northeast coast near the tramuntana-teased marshes of S'Albufera des Grau until, accused by locals of being a spy, he fled. Ninety years later, Menorca's

Clockwise from far left: The pool scene at the chic villa Es Bec D'Aguila; typical Menorcan lobster stew at Sa Llagosta; admiring a Rashid Johnson painting at Menorca's Hauser & Wirth gallery; early evening in Ciutadella's Plaça D'Alfons III; lavender, picked fresh from the gardens at Es Bec D'Aguila

mystique and intrigue still call artists from near and far, who disappear into its rural fincas. In their indeliberate way, they are helping this sleepy isle attract a new set of wanderers.

"Waking up, communing with the earth, the sea, stone, and sky is still a wild revelation," says Nuria Roman, a Madrileña artist who moved to Es Castell, a town just east of Mahón, in 1997. "Everyone and everything is at the mercy of the power of the island." Roman helped transform the old Lithica marés—Menorcan limestone—quarry near Ciutadella, the island's largest town, into a public space that hosts the art festival Pedra Viva ("Living Stone"). "My gallery in Madrid told me I had to return to the 'art world,'" she says, shrugging. "But I just stay here like a stone and people come to me." The island's tranquility helped Chicago-born Rashid Johnson complete *Anxious Men,* his painting series on the crushing pressures of modern life. The angry blood-and-black faces of his canvases finally gave way to a serene white. Johnson showed last year at Hauser & Wirth's new location on Illa del Rei, a tiny island in the Mahón harbor, whose 2021 opening prompted a wider set of travelers and creatives to begin paying attention to Menorca. Swiss-born mega-gallerists Manuela and Iwan Wirth, whose empire spans from New York to Hong Kong, opened the spot after falling in love with the island on a day trip from Mallorca. "They discovered our cultural history, which is really unknown but rich for such a small island," says Mar Rescalvo, the gallery's Menorcan director, as we walk beneath a Louise Bourgeois spider and past a bulbous bronze object by Joan Miró through a perennial garden designed by the landscape architect Piet Oudolf, where Cleopatra butterflies land gracefully on the lavender.

Not long after Hauser & Wirth, the contemporary-art center



WHERE TO STAY

Amagatay Menorca
A trio of Balearic hoteliers brings the sophisticated but minimal aesthetic of their Can Domo in Ibiza to Menorca with this new agriturismo (soon to be followed with a second property, Hotel Morvedra Nou) with stone walls and wooden rafters. *From about $210; amagataymenorca.com*

Cristine Bedfor
Madrileña Cristina Lozano opened this 21-room boutique hotel, which occupies three 18th-century Mahón cottages, with her friend Daniel Entrecanales in 2021. Magpie interior designer Lorenzo Castillo is behind the menagerie of antique toby jugs, propeller fans, tapestries, and Turkish silk divans in shades of red and blue. *From about $322; cristinebedforhotel.com*

Es Bec d'Aguila
Paris architects Atelier du Pont contemporized this historic estate with a sleek green onyx bar, earth-toned ceramics, and well-sourced modern art. Many of the 11 bright and breezy bedrooms open onto the villa's 148 acres. *From $30,000 per week; esbecdaguila.com*

Menorca Experimental
Conceived by Parisian designer Dorothée Meilichzon as the imagined island bolt-hole of Pablo Picasso, this hotel's 43 rooms and villas, spa, and cocktail bar (which serves a eucalyptus Negroni with homemade infused Xoriguer gin) are done up in oxbloods and clay pinks, with wavelike modernist murals. *From about $215; menorcaexperimental.com*

Son Blanc Farmhouse
Son Blanc Farmhouse, Es Bec d'Aguila's wilder sister property, is a self-sufficient, high-design agriturismo on a regenerative farm, where 14 rooms have reclaimed wood, with bespoke pieces from Catalan artisans using stone, wool, and clay. *From about $215; sonblancmenorca.com*

Torre Vella
Les Domaines de Fontenille, a group of hotels and restaurants founded in Luberon, Provence, has debuted Torre Vella, a 17-room retreat in an Aragon watchtower with walls adorned with hanging prickly pears and art from cofounder Guillaume Foucher's collection. *From about $322; lesdomaines defontenille.com*

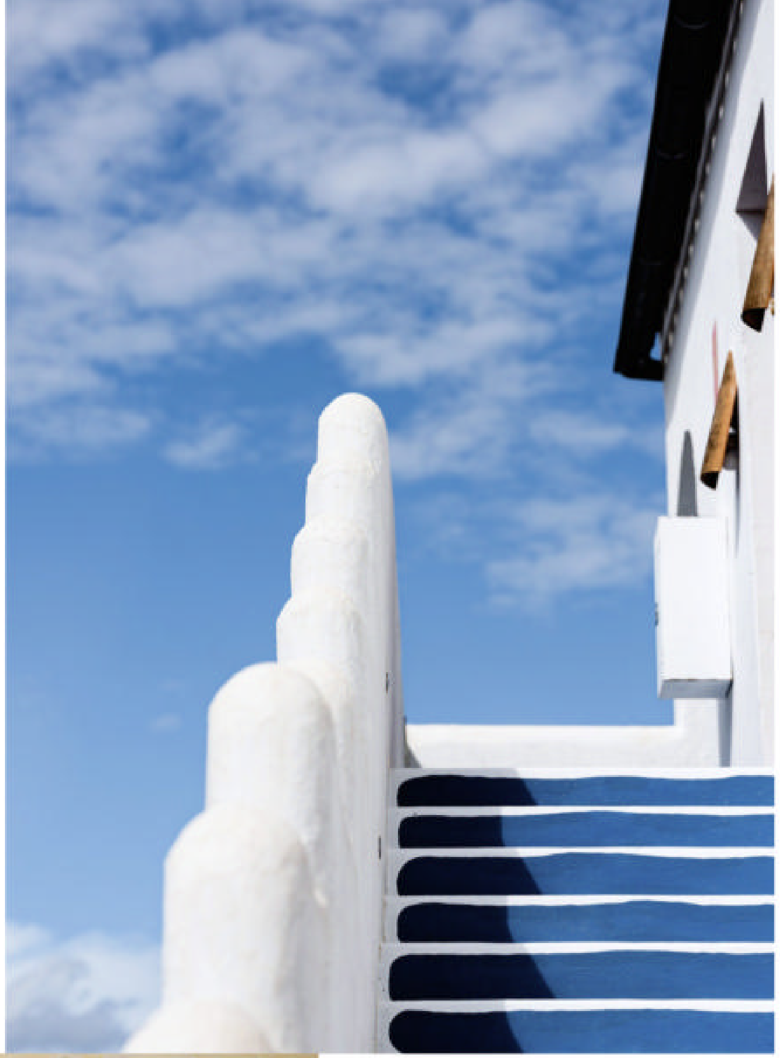
Clockwise from far left: A cozy island lounge at Es Bec D'Aguila; Menorca's verdant Alaior municipality, near the capital of Mahón, is known for its cheesemaking; coffee and dessert at Cantina, at the Hauser & Wirth gallery; chef David Coca with trusted companion Mero; snorkeling at Es Caló Blanc beach, a small cove in the south

LÔAC opened in the interior city of Alaior with a wing devoted to the conceptual artist Marina Abramović, further cementing Menorca's new status as a global art destination. In recent years, others have followed the Wirths' lead in migrating eastward from the saturated scenes of Ibiza and Mallorca to find that the more languid pace of the most reclusive Balearic island now coincides with their idea of paradise. "The French love it here for the nature, slow living, and opportunity," says Emmanuel de Sola, a Parisian music executive turned artisanal baker, outside Pigalle, his eatery in the town of Maó, beneath a sky of faded denim. Last year, De Sola, his wife, Stephanie (formerly of Celine and Isabel Marant), and their two children moved from the 19th arrondissement to the French-founded municipality Sant Lluís in the sandy south. "We thought Menorca was boring at first," he says. "Disturbingly quiet. Then we relaxed. It wasn't sexy, but the landscape itself was like Ibiza mixed with Brittany. Everything was so close—nature, wild beaches."

At Cala Alcaufar, a beach on Menorca's southern tip, hushed sunbathers knit and read, their hair tousled by the breeze. Farther west is Es Caló Blanc, a Hockney-blue natural swimming pool, where sun-kissed bodies lie splayed across the limestone platforms. Circumnavigating the entire island is the Camí de Cavalls, a 115-mile coastal path from which trekkers can access 70 other coves. Once patrolled by mounted soldiers, it is now partly camouflaged by wild ullastre olive trees. "When I first came here, I couldn't believe a place like this existed," says Pierre-Charles Cros, cofounder of the Paris-based Experimental Group. "It had disappeared off the map. It was so green I felt like I was in Ireland, and yet you had these Caribbean coves." In 2019, the youthful profferer of creative cocktails shook up the island's erstwhile image as a haunt of British pensioners with the opening of Menorca Experimental in an old military base near Cala Llucalari, a pristine beach on the southern coast, which the group reimagined as Pablo Picasso's Menorcan home. "Here, you feel like an explorer. Everything is hidden. It feels like a secret world."

Nearby, down a dusty red-earth road where birds chant as rhythmically as cicadas, are the finca retreats of various notable figures. They include Jean-François Moueix, scion of Bordeaux's Château Petrus, who was drawn to the Menorca's regenerated vineyards; the intrepid French hotelier Arnaud Zannier; and Frédéric Biousse, the former CEO of Sandro and Maje, who cofounded Les Domaines de Fontenille, a group of hotels and restaurants. Yet from the main road, the landscape before me, clumped with cumulus-like bushes, appears as empty as the sky.

"Menorcan luxury is not about being seen—it's about hiding out," says British Menorcan Benedicta Linares-Pearce, who owns Es Bec d'Aguila, an 11-bedroom hilltop retreat in an 1890s



Clockwise from left: Local ceramicist Blanca Madruga; outside the trendy Menorca Experimental bar; the rustic but modern living room at new hotel Son Blanc Farmhouse; a pomegranate tree at Es Bec D'Aguila, where much of the food is grown on-site; taking a break on Plaça de la Catedral in Ciutadella

mansion that she enlisted Parisian decorator Anne-Cécile Comar to reimagine in a palette of storm blues and dawn pinks. After a career in textiles, Linares-Pearce and her French husband, Benoit Pellegrini, bought two abandoned estates in 2018 and worked with the Patrimonio Nacional, the Menorcan heritage body, through renovations. "It took so many tries to get a shade of green they would approve for the shutters," she says, laughing. "But the rules protect the island from the wrong people. Preservationism attracts the green-minded." Their second estate, Son Blanc, is now a self-sufficient hotel that generates its own power, with 296 acres of permaculture. "Benoit is very passionate about it," she says as we wade down to the fields where quail scuttle out of the hare's-tail grass. "He has a little club. They get together and talk tomatoes."

By the dock in Fornells, a quiet village on the island's northern coast, a French bulldog named Mero is sitting on his favorite lap. It belongs to Menorquí David Coca, who, with his beard and chef's whites, resembles a Victorian-era barber-cum-pirate. "You've heard of hunting dogs? Well, Mero is a fishing dog. He stands on the front of his owner's boat and barks when he sees fish." He chuckles to the clink of rigging and cutlery outside his restaurant Sa Llagosta. "Most Menorquís have a boat. We live by the seasons. In winter we hunt thrushes and woodcock." Coca took the helm of the restaurant 24 years ago, reviving traditional Menorcan recipes such as fisherman's caldereta de langosta, a tomatoey lobster stew. "No one came here at first. But the world's changed. Now the most cultivated people are most in love with this simple life."

Southwest is Ciutadella, the old seat of Arabic Manûrqa, where the cathedral, built atop a mosque, rises like a palm-cooled sandstone throne. It is home to Es Tast De Na Silvia, a pioneering Slow Food restaurant from local chef Silvia Anglada. "Menorcan food should be slow and humble," she says as she adorns plates of arroz de la tierra (a Menorcan farmer's grain dish in a broth of boiled shrimp) with wildflowers, beneath the vaulted ceilings of a former 16th-century chapel. Her recipes, influenced by a local 18th-century Franciscan cookbook by Fra Friar, use antique xeixa wheat, an unrefined variety dating back to the Bronze Age, which she sources from family-run farm La Marcona. Farther north, Son Felip is a model bioregenerative farm with stables of Cavall Menorquí, Menorca's black horses. The air is sweet with the honey-tinged manure. A huddle of Menorcan red cows rises like sudden sand dunes in the fields. The antique breed cleans the woodlands in an ancient version of agroforestry. "It's not the cow, it's the how,"

explains agricultural director Francesc Font, who over the last eight years has converted local farmers to permaculture using super-plants like red clover. “We now have the most regenerative farms per square meter in Europe. There’s something magical happening here.” Olive cultivation, which has historically been deterred by that north wind, has also risen on the island, yielding award-winning organic olive oils.

Near the stables, I mount one of the sturdy mares, demure but proud with her dark, shiny coat. Riding along the wild north coast, past pines passionately entwined like tango dancers, I feel closer to this island. In the sepia-toned summer, it is easy to forget the force of this mighty little land. We reach the coast and race along the crashing waves. I feel as if nothing but the wind can stop me.

WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

Binifadet
When the late engineer Carlos Anglés bought his Binifadet estate in Sant Llíus in 2002, he resuscitated not only 38 tancas (dry-stone-walled plots of vines) but also the craft of Menorcan winemaking. Developed by the Romans and exploited by the British, the island’s viticulture had nearly vanished by the mid–20th century. Today, in addition to running the winery, Anglés’s son Luis has revived beloved Menorcan institutions, from Mahón’s American Bar to Tamarindos, on the beach. He also opened Cantina, the restaurant at art gallery Hauser & Wirth, in the former kitchen of Mahón’s 18th-century British naval hospital. *binifadet.com*

Moll de Sa Punta
This spry new tapas bar inside Club Náutico de Villacarlos, Es Castell’s former sailing club, has harbor views, rough walls, and photographs of Cales Fonts’s salt-worn fishermen. Chase sardine rillettes and marinated rabbit with herbal liqueurs from distillery Biniarbolla, founded in 1930. *sapuntamenorca.com*

Ses Forquilles
A pioneer when it opened 17 years ago in Mahón, this seasonally driven restaurant now has four siblings around the island under the stewardship of owners Oriol Castell and Marco Collado, all spreading the gospel of elevated seasonal cooking. *sesforquilles.com*

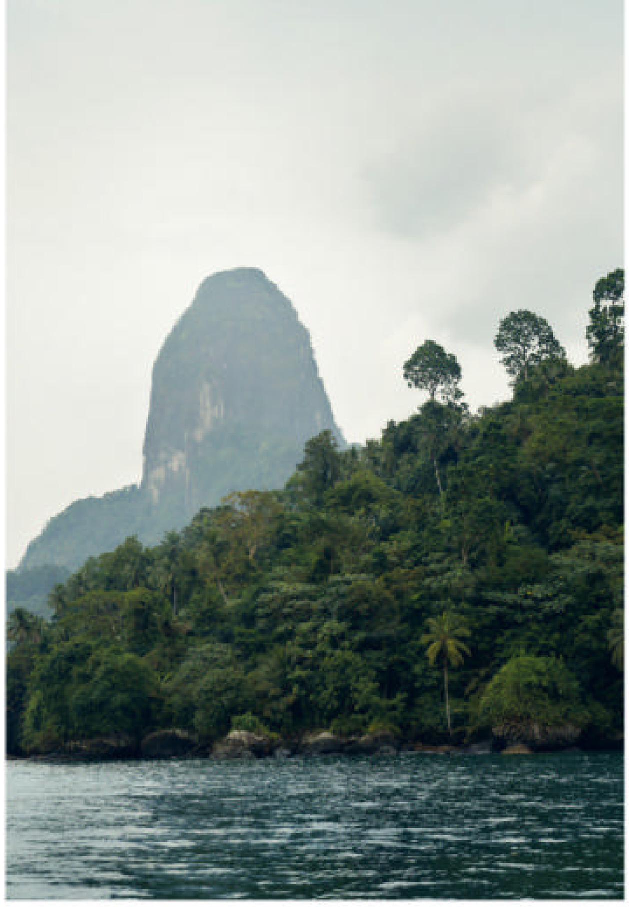
Quitapenas
Laura Llompart and her Uruguayan husband, Alejo, opened this neighborhood favorite in the southern village of Sant Lluís, serving hearty plates that trace the multicultural roots of the island’s food, from hummus to falafel and chickpea croquettes. *quitapenasmenorca.com*

Smoix
This Ciutadella hot spot recently added five rooms with striking shutters in shades of midnight green and octopus ink. A reviving escabèche is a perfect way to end a day wandering around the old Arabic capital. *smoix.com*

an oasis in the Atlantic

São Tomé and Príncipe, the verdant island nation off the coast of West Africa, is becoming one of the world's leading ecotourism destinations

Photographs by Graydon Herriott



You feel as though you are in a botanical garden," says photographer Nikole Herriott. "Butterflies are everywhere, soaring trees that are over 100 years old, and red, yellow, and green cocoa pods hang under canopies of orange flowers. The fragrance of ylang-ylang trees and breadfruit hangs in the air." These twin islands in the Gulf of Guinea also have biodiverse rain forests that support more endemic species than the Galápagos (in 2012, Príncipe was designated by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve), as well as million-year-old mountains, pristine waterfalls, and untouched tawny beaches reached only by boat. Their history is harsh: Portuguese rulers turned much of this bountiful land into sugar and cocoa plantations, worked over by enslaved people. A rise of democratic reform following the end of colonialism has introduced some stability, allowing São Tomé and Príncipe to emerge as an ecotourism pioneer. That's thanks in no small part to the hospitality brand HBD Príncipe, founded 13 years ago by South African tech entrepreneur Mark Shuttleworth. With four properties—Sundy Praia, Roça Sundy, and Bom Bom (reopening in 2024) on Príncipe and Omali on São Tomé—it is now the tiny nation's largest employer, devoted to community empowerment through tourism-driven economic growth. The company has turned much of the land into concessions to preserve fragile wildlife like sea turtles. Now travelers don't just reap the rewards of exploring these protected virgin areas; they do so knowing that their dollars are benefiting the islands' rightful custodians. MARY HOLLAND

Julie Palo Hayes can arrange bespoke tours to São Tomé and Príncipe. A six-night trip starts at around $4,000 per person; smartflyer.com

Clockwise from top left: Strolling Praia Boi, a secluded beach on the northeast coast of Príncipe; former stables next to the main hotel at HBD's Roça Sundy; João Dias Pai peak rises 834 feet on Príncipe; buying yellow cocoa pods at São Tomé's Mercado de Bobo Forro; orange-flowering *Erythrina* trees were brought to the island to provide shade to cocoa pods; many details in HBD Sundy Praia's bamboo-heavy dining room are from local artisans

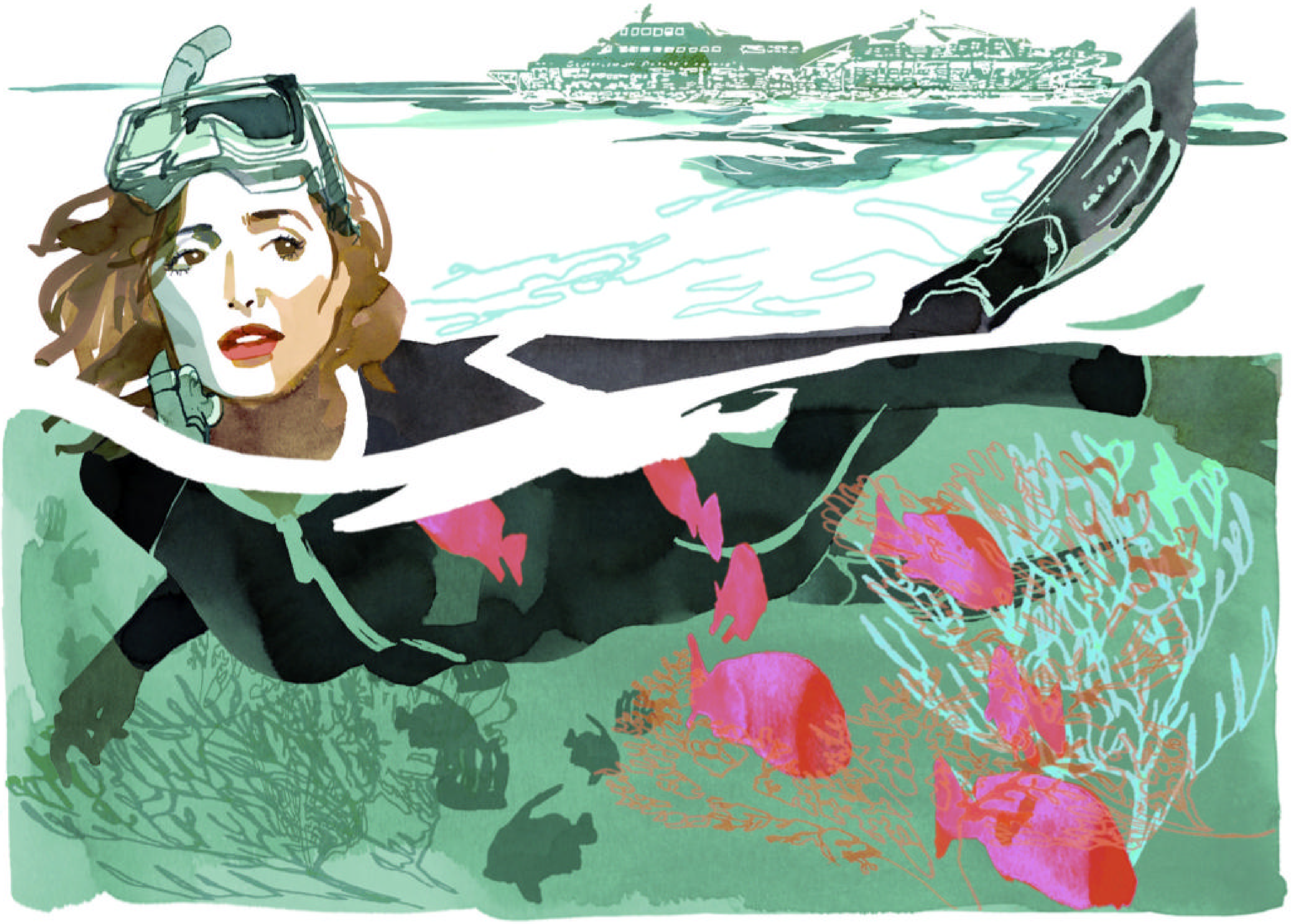


ILLUSTRATION BY SARA SINGH

Actor ROSE BYRNE on AUSTRALIA'S GREAT BARRIER REEF

"Back in January 2017, my partner, Bobby [Cannavale], and I were staying at Silky Oaks Lodge in the Daintree Rainforest. It was our first time on holiday since our son was born. We were doing all of these excursions, and one day we decided to go snorkeling off the Great Barrier Reef. I grew up in Sydney, and it was a place that I'd heard so much about, so to finally go was extraordinary. It also felt very adventurous for us—something to undertake together and literally dive into, rather than just lie on the beach. But I was quite nervous on the way there. We got on the road early, at eight in the morning. It was a 30-minute drive from the hotel down to Port Douglas, where we took this huge boat out to the reef. It was summer, the high season, and there were about 400 other people on board. The feeling of the wetsuit clinging to you, so that only your eyes and mouth are exposed, is such a safe one, and the people who run these expeditions are unflappable, such pros. We felt like we were in good hands. We got into the water, and it was so warm, salty, just teeming with life—and the colors of the fish immediately put me at ease. I was amazed, really. I just could not believe that it was all so vibrant and alive and bright. What was really striking were the combinations of colors: magentas and crimsons and the brightest, *brightest* yellows put together in ways that I'd never seen before. A real fashion show, with big fish and little fish. All creative people should visit and see it for themselves. It was like drinking pure air. I actually felt high." AS TOLD TO CHARLIE HOBBS

ROSE BYRNE IS THE BRAND AMBASSADOR FOR TOURISM AUSTRALIA. SHE STARS IN *INSIDIOUS: FEAR THE DARK,* IN THEATERS JULY 7.

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